Commentary

Volume Sixty-five, Number Three, March 1978

THE MIDDLE EAST: FOR A SEPARATE PEACE

Robert W. Tucker

Among the South Africans

Dan Jacobson

The Rediscovery of the Family
Nathan Glazer

Politics and Amnesty International
Stephen Miller

Modernism, the Germans & the Jews
Robert Alter

MUSIC

Does Performance Matter?
Samuel Lipman

FICTION

A Novelist Under Communism
Pearl K. Bell

BOOKS

Dorothy Rabinowitz
Paul Gagnon
Ruth R. Wisse
William J. Bennett
Murray Friedman
Michael Ledeen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I'll have to take these for the rest of my life. Thank God."

by Sy Levin.

I'm an advertising copywriter. And I had an assignment to create a message about the cost effectiveness of pharmaceuticals. In other words, that you get back what you pay for them.

I was reviewing the literature when I realized it was talking about me. I have high blood pressure.

My doctor discovered it about six months ago. Today it's very much under control, thanks to a small tablet I take daily.

It's an expense and another daily "must," but when my doctor explained the alternatives, I knew I was ahead of the game.

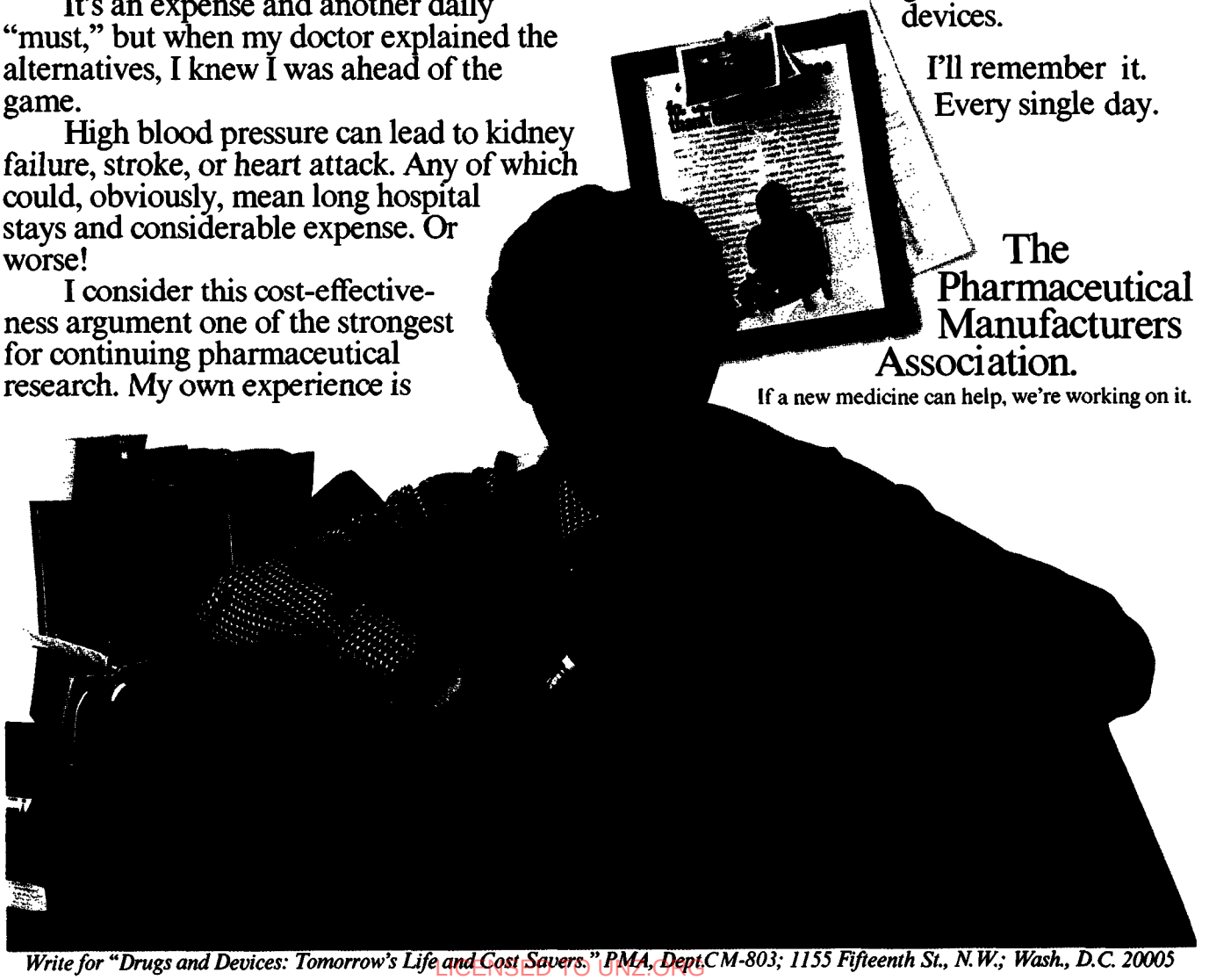
High blood pressure can lead to kidney failure, stroke, or heart attack. Any of which could, obviously, mean long hospital stays and considerable expense. Or worse!

I consider this cost-effectiveness argument one of the strongest for continuing pharmaceutical research. My own experience is only one example. For some ulcer patients, a drug that can reduce the need for surgery has recently been approved. So has another that dissolves pulmonary blood clots.

Research *will* undoubtedly lead to more breakthrough controls or cures. It'll save more suffering—and a lot of money.

Let's remember that—despite the need to hold down medical care costs. Let's remember that we dare not jeopardize research for better drugs and medical devices.

I'll remember it.
Every single day.

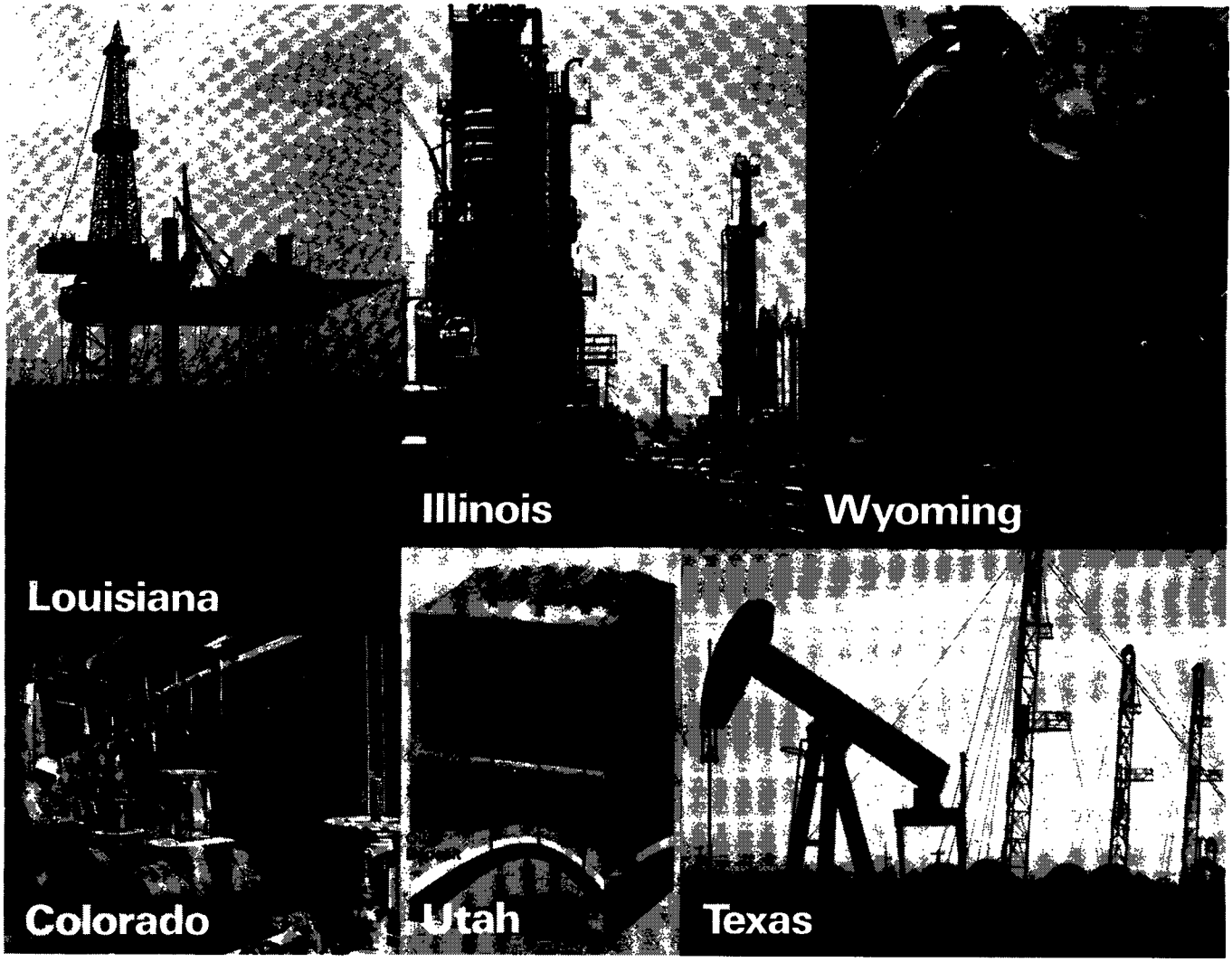


The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association.

If a new medicine can help, we're working on it.

Write for "Drugs and Devices: Tomorrow's Life and Cost Savers." PMA, Dept.CM-803; 1155 Fifteenth St., N.W.; Wash., D.C. 20005

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Amoco is a leader in providing secure energy supplies here in America.

"American jobs depend on a secure supply of American energy."

A more secure supply of domestic energy is vital to America's future. And Amoco is a leader in providing it. For example, we've developed techniques for producing energy from heretofore inaccessible areas. We're presently untrapping oil from tight sandstone formations—two miles underground. America's jobs, and the future of our economy and our way of life, depend on a secure source of energy. Energy produced here in America. At Amoco, we're committed to doing our share to find and develop that energy.

AMOCO

Amoco Oil Company

You expect more from a leader.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 65 NUMBER 3 MARCH 1978

Articles	25	The Middle East: For a Separate Peace *Robert W. Tucker*
	32	Among the South Africans *Dan Jacobson*
	49	The Rediscovery of the Family *Nathan Glazer*
	57	Politics and Amnesty International *Stephen Miller*
In the Community	61	Modernism, the Germans & the Jews *Robert Alter*
Music	68	Does Performance Matter? *Samuel Lipman*
Fiction	71	A Novelist Under Communism *Pearl K. Bell*
Letters	6	from *Leonard J. Theberge, T.A. Murphy, Robert Greer Cohn, John E. Chappell, Jr., Albert Sanders, H. L. Vener, Samuel McCracken, Israel Shenker, Henry Walter Brann, George Saver, Yirmiahu Yovel, Herbert L. Wurth, Irene Roth,* and others
Books in Review	76	Anne Sexton: A Self-Portrait in Letters, edited by Linda Gray Sexton and Lois Ames *Dorothy Rabinowitz*
	78	Our Children's Crippled Future, by Frank E. Armbruster with Paul Bracken *Paul Gagnon*
	80	Image Before My Eyes, by Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett; An Illustrated Sourcebook on the Holocaust, by Zosa Szajkowski *Ruth R. Wisse*
	82	One L, by Scott Turow *William J. Bennett*
	84	The Cop Who Would Be King, by Joseph R. Daughen and Peter Binzen *Murray Friedman*
	86	The Vast Majority, by Michael Harrington *Michael Ledeen*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editor: Brenda Brown
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Comptroller: Philip Shamis
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

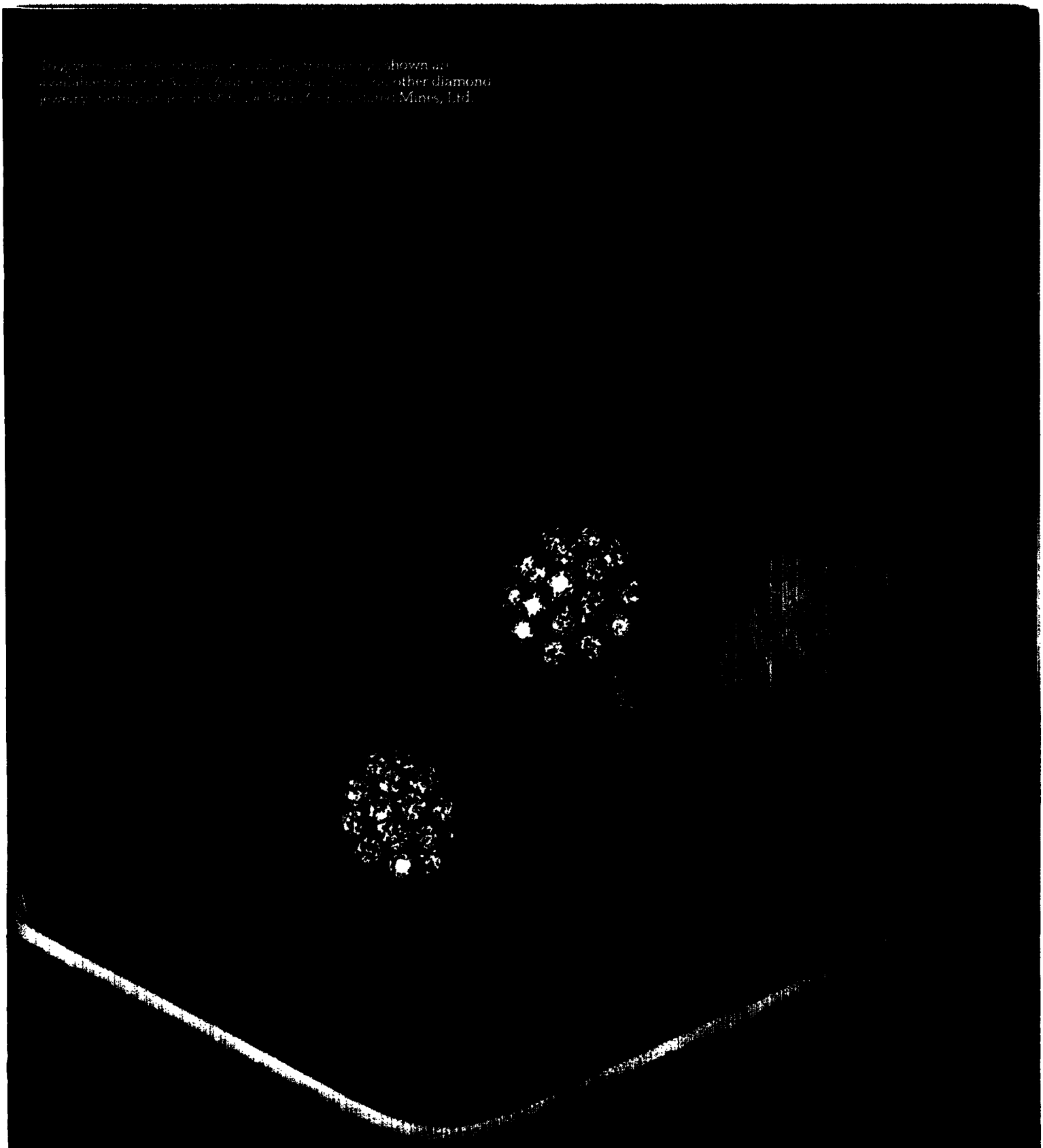
COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.00, $20 a year; 3 years $54; 5 years $80—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 1978 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shown at
other diamond
Mines, Ltd.



I told her we were going "out on the town" for her birthday,
and she said she had nothing to wear.

A diamond is forever.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"This is the set where they shot 'Hello, Dolly!' What you can't see is us pumping oil behind it."

"One of the strangest places I ever produced oil," says Gulf Production Superintendent Eddie Culbertson, "was right here in Los Angeles in the back lot of the 20th Century-Fox studio.

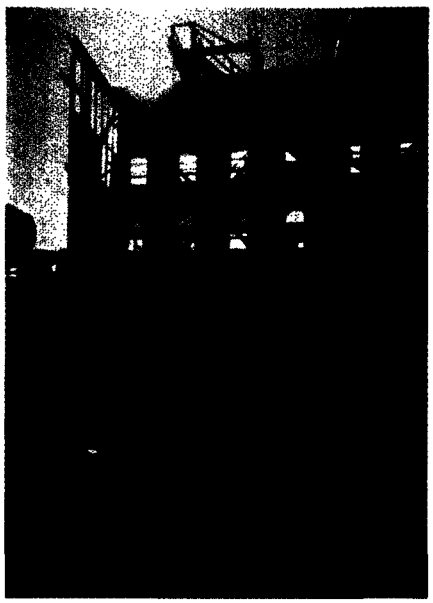
"We showed them how they could have their oil *and* their movies."

"They found a big oil field right under a permanent set being used for shooting the movie 'Hello, Dolly!' in 1969.

The indirect approach

"How do you get at the oil without disturbing the set, the streets, or the buildings? With a technique called directional drilling. The oil is under the city as far away as one mile from the surface location of the drill sites, which are hidden by the scenery.

"Directional drilling has other advantages. You can drill 20 or 30 wells from one drill site instead of filling the landscape with oil derricks. Or you can drill for some offshore oil without putting the drilling rig right in the water.



"Behind the scenery are 22 producing oil wells."

Keep America beautiful

"Sometimes it's a real challenge getting the oil without spoiling the landscape. Directional drilling is one way to do it. There are many more.

"Getting the oil out and preserving the environment is a challenge, but I'd say we were meeting it very well."

Gulf

Gulf people: meeting the challenge.

Main intersection at a Hollywood oil field.

Gulf Oil Corporation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Richard Maass, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Edward E. Elson, *Chairman*

Norman Alexander
Donald M. Blinken
Charles D. Breitel
Naomi W. Cohen
Theodore Ellenoff
Richard C. Ernst
Edith U. Fierst
Maurice Glinert
Robert H. Haines
Lewis J. Laventhol
Bess Myerson
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

More on Nuclear Energy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken's candid, balanced, yet passionate discussion of nuclear energy in "The War Against the Atom" [September 1977] is an intelligent and refreshing contribution to public debate which has hitherto been notable chiefly for pseudo-scientific analysis and religious conviction. Certainly, the letters from readers in response to Mr. McCracken's article [December 1977] strikingly reveal how strident, irrational, and unbalanced many of the nuclear critics are. . . .

As a non-scientist attempting to learn about the hazards and benefits of nuclear energy, I have had occasion to read publications from both anti- and pro-nuclear forces. The average reader, if he is not infatuated by the litany of the adversary culture, cannot help but be impressed by the differences in approach. The proponents of nuclear energy generally present their argument in clear terms and follow scientific methodology; they consider all the evidence, both for and against claims of safety, cost-effectiveness of nuclear power as against other energy sources, problems of storage and disposal of nuclear waste, and the hazards of terrorism. The opponents of nuclear energy generally resort to different methods. Rather than formulating their theories clearly so as to expose them as unambiguously as possible to refutation, they prefer first to reformulate them continually, thereby evading refutation, and second, to move from one theory to another as quickly as the evidence mounts overwhelmingly against them. The pseudo-scientist betrays himself instantly by his unwillingness to risk scientific verification. . . .

Mr. McCracken has performed a valuable service, not only with his original article, but by taking the time to answer letters from his critics point by point. Anyone interested in this issue, upon which the prosperity and perhaps even the survival of our open competitive society depends, should read this debate. Whatever estimates about future energy needs one may prefer, one should not overlook the high stake our citizens (and those of the world) have in the continuous availability of reasonably priced, secure, and plentiful energy, and safe and efficient handling of nuclear material.

LEONARD J. THEBERGE
National Legal Center for the Public Interest
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The War Against the Atom" by Samuel McCracken is indeed impressive, both in its clarity and in its perceptive analysis of the misinformation that has been generated by opponents of nuclear power.

T. A. MURPHY
Chairman, General Motors Corporation
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Despite the technical brilliance of Samuel McCracken's argument, he is not going to talk some of us out of the notion that the final objection to nuclear development springs from holistic, or generally human, grounds (or "moral" grounds, as the National Council of Churches . . . says). It is on this terrain that we are concerned with the health, spiritual and physical, of society. . . .

It is insufficient to *count*, as Mr. McCracken does, the number of dead in coal mining, or, for that matter, in patriotic wars, as opposed to the statistics of putative nuclear disaster. It is easier to risk dying in some ways than in others. When interviewed, the miners say much the same thing and often show a stubborn attachment to the mining way of life despite the loss of loved ones in accidents. One has to be wary of bourgeois glibness here, to be sure, and I am not for a moment suggesting that society should relax its efforts to improve mine safety. But what I am saying is that a humane realism implies something other than the hideous and spiritually murderous, perhaps totally murderous, perfectionism of the immature minds which create scientific utopias, and, in the name of a lazy and improvident pragmatism, playing up to the adolescent gadget-lover in most of us, foist their substitutes for living on the disoriented masses of our time. . . .

Unlike the National Council of Churches, Mr. McCracken is not bothered by the split in the scientific community over nuclear peril. He finds all the true expertise on

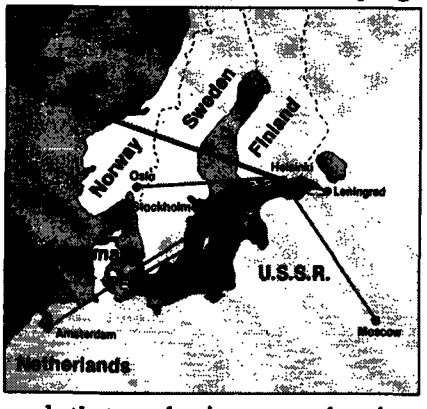
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How Henni Salmi, the Finn, accidentally created the world's first smörgåsbord back in 753 A.D. when her husband Heikki thoughtlessly invited his entire Viking lodge home for dinner.

Smörgås means open sandwich. *Bord* means table. Precisely what *smörgås* go on your *bord* is determined by the imagination of whoever is preparing the *smörgåsbord.*

The Scandinavians have wonderful imaginations. The grilled, the poached, the smoked herring, trout, eel, and salmon; the black, brown, coarse and fine breads; the crackling fresh vegetables; the shell-fish raw, steamed and sauteed; the sausage sweet and spicy, hard and soft; the red and the black scoops of caviar; the cheeses mild to sharp to stinging; the icy Finlandia Vodka and wild berry liqueurs from beyond the Arctic Circle.

A hot and cold, sweet and pungent symphony of a buffet.



This is smörgåsbord, and it can be yours every day you spend in these lands of the midnight sun.

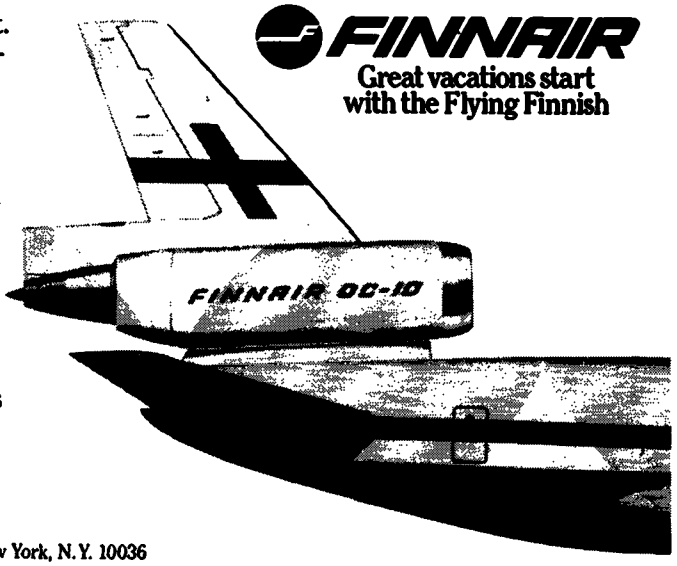
Only Finnair can jet you direct to Helsinki, the gateway to the rest of Scandinavia. It is from this friendly Finnish capital of side-walk cafes and harbor-bordered parks and gracious boulevards that you begin your exploration of Finland's lake country, her Baltic coastal towns, her Lapland and her close Scandinavian neighbors.

There is Norway's bustling Oslo, her Viking ships, the Kon-Tiki raft, her naughty sculptures and spectacular fjords; there is gay Copenhagen, her Tivoli Gardens, her "little Mermaid" of the harbor; there is Stockholm, her old town with its crooked, cobbled streets, her wonderful shopping, restaurants and theater.

This, then, is a tiny taste of Scandinavia. Like her people, her summers are gentle and warm. Her beauties are vivid. As will be your memories years after you return from this extraordinary corner of our world.

FINNAIR

Great vacations start with the Flying Finnish



For further information contact your travel agent or write: Finnair, 580 Fifth Ave. New York, N.Y. 10036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ever wonder about * and

With * and #, new telephone services will soon be at your fingertips. These services will be possible because technological innovations from Bell Laboratories and Western Electric are transforming the nation's telecommunications network.

For example, with * and #, you may be able to arrange distinctive ringing for incoming calls from telephones you designate.

You'll be able to protect your privacy by having callers get a "do not disturb" signal when they dial your number; or, when you dial a call and reach a busy signal, you'll be able to set up a callback system that will wait until the line is free, then ring your phone and the one you're calling automatically.

A New Kind of Network.

New telecommunications technology designed by Bell Labs and manufactured by Western Electric is bringing you this versatile network. Its main elements are an array of electronic switching systems (ESS) interconnected by high-capacity transmission links, and a new "signaling" system to carry call-handling information.

Stored-Program Control.

At the heart of each ESS is something called stored-program control. With it, the system's calls are controlled by coded instructions, stored in a memory and executed by a central processor. New features can be added by updating the stored instructions rather than rewiring or making complex equipment changes.

The new signaling system that will connect these switching systems operates like a high-speed private intercom. It carries all the information needed to handle each call and frees time on the voice circuits that previously carried such information.

Over 1000 local and long-distance ESS's are already in service, and twenty regional centers for the new signaling network are in place.

These innovations are possible largely because of advances in solid-state electronics. Because of their decreasing cost, low power consumption and speed of operation, today's integrated circuits are enabling engineers to design more capability into communications systems at lower cost.

Building on Bell System accomplishments such as Direct Distance Dialing, digital communications and high-capacity transmission systems, modern electronics permits the new network to handle a wide variety of communications needs.

Continuing Innovation.

All these technical achievements, and their integration into the telecommunications network, result from the close collaboration of Bell Labs, Western Electric and Bell System telephone companies.

Because of this teamwork, Bell telephone companies will give you the innovative services represented by * and # and continue to provide the world's most reliable telephone service for the least $ and ¢.

Bell Laboratories

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one side, his. This is clearly a gross exaggeration, but worse, it indicates another imaginative dereliction. If only two or three competent scientists told me that my house was located over a dangerous accumulation of explosive gas, even though dozens said the opposite, I would move.

. . . We are going to have to steer dangerously between the Scylla of energy shortage, which will put us in a tricky position vis-à-vis the dehumanized Communist technical juggernaut, and the Charybdis of runaway scientific monstrosity in our own country. We have no good choice but to go down that health-seeking middle path. We must gradually phase out the clearly excessive aspects of nuclear development, as we have wisely begun to do with plutonium breeders, and proceed with other kinds of energy development on various fronts. . . .

ROBERT GREER COHN
Stanford University
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Samuel McCracken's article one finds pro-nuclear arguments about reactor safety and efficiency, waste disposal, weapons proliferation, etc. which are difficult to judge properly if one is not oneself an expert on the fission process. . . . But on those matters Mr. McCracken discusses which I understand reasonably well—alternative energy sources and the . . . Clamshell Alliance—I can say that he hardly builds a reputation for accuracy. . . .

One of the strongest arguments against nuclear power is that it is useful *only* in thermal electrical plants, which inherently waste two-thirds of any energy used as fuel, unless waste-heat utilization is built into the system, as it usually is not. But the sensible hope, promoted by Amory Lovins and others with very impressive scientific training, to cut down on all forms of electricity use in order to escape this waste, is conveniently avoided by Mr. McCracken. So are the dangers and wastes associated with long-distance energy transmission from large centralized sources, now a cause of massive resistance by farmers in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

The crucial issue of centralized control of energy—virtually assured in a nuclear-dominated system—vs. individualized, democratic control, is treated by Mr. McCracken only very briefly and peripherally, when he mentions supposedly "prohibitively expensive" small-scale solar electric generation. . . .

Also, Mr. McCracken does not discuss the important matter of nuclear energy being non-renewable. Unwittingly, perhaps, he informs us that even a "breeder" is not an inexhaustible source of energy, so that nuclear power can only be a stopgap measure over the long haul, even though it may carry us farther into the future than coal.

Mr. McCracken also avoids the issue of employment. Many proponents of nuclear power argue that jobs will be lost if nuclear power plants are not built, but the other side has effectively countered this argument by showing that many more jobs will result from alternative technologies, including conservation measures.

The arguments of nuclear critics which Mr. McCracken chooses to try to refute are not always handled thoroughly, either. For instance, while blaming anti-nuclear forces for adding to delays and cost increases of nuclear plants, Mr. McCracken fails to note that even without these obstructive tactics, the costs of nuclear energy would have risen faster than costs of any competing energy source in recent years. It is still argued that nuclear power is cheaper than coal power, but this claim is usually made while ignoring various ancillary costs such as those of waste disposal. In any case, the construction alone of a nuclear plant is now much more costly than that of a coal plant.

In still other cases, Mr. McCracken bypasses or downplays arguments by anti-nuclear interests with more evident interest in exercising his skills at sarcasm and verbal put-downs than in arriving at the truth. Accusing Ralph Nader and John Abbots of "sleazy evasion" in not mentioning that coal production leads to more deaths per unit of energy produced than does uranium production, he manages to evade . . . the very cogent point—which he himself has just mentioned—that we cannot now know how many cancers from uranium and plutonium use will show up in future years.

Mr. McCracken leans on known nuclear advocate Roger Revelle and a "blue-ribbon" panel . . . to tell us how burning too much coal can raise the world's temperature "11 degrees." Is this fahrenheit or centigrade? It does make quite a difference. In either case, the figure he cites differs from that of more objective and cautious analyses of the CO_2 warming problem by Wallace Broecker and others, who have specialized more intently in this area than have Revelle and his panel.

In dealing with coal-fired electricity, Mr. McCracken aims his most vicious slander at the anti-nuclear forces, accusing them of "calm willingness to sacrifice the lives of coal miners." In reality, the vast bulk of anti-nuclear activists argue *against* fossil fuels as sound alternatives to nuclear power. . . .

Mr. McCracken is unable to place faith in solar, wind, or other clean and renewable alternatives because his basic approach seems limited to the tangible here and now. He finds them "too expensive to contemplate," mainly because he finds such difficulty in *contemplating* what still is only *potential*. For the "foreseeable" future he offers only coal and nuclear power, but this is Mr. McCracken's prediction, not that of numerous better-trained energy specialists who know that many forms of solar energy are now commercially feasible, and still more alternatives would be if only the present energy establishment had not applied pressure on government agencies and on ratepayers to discourage their development and use. At the same MIT on which Mr. McCracken leans for pro-nuclear arguments, for instance, a research project on alcohol as a motor-car fuel lost its funding with the help of pressure from the oil industry. . . .

Besides misrepresenting what the Clamshell Alliance thinks about coal and other alternative energy sources, Mr. McCracken presents a very distorted image of the actions of those involved in the Clamshell Alliance. He calls them "anti-democratic" because they opposed a nuclear plant that had the sanction of law. Thus he ignores not only the essential meaning of minority civil disobedience, and its respected place in American tradition at least since the time of Henry David Thoreau (not to mention the time of the American Revolution itself), but also the fact that New Hampshire citizens near Seabrook consistently voted against the plant in local polls and referenda. Their wishes were ignored by state officials placed in power with the help of an outspokenly biased

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

newspaper editor, William Loeb, for whom they also had no chance to vote. . . .

Like those who accused anti-Vietnam war demonstrators of violence, ignoring the far greater violence they sought to stop, Mr. McCracken finds danger only in vocal and active mass movements, not in the calmer, relatively hidden workings of bureaucrats and politicians with far more power and often less sensitivity to the needs of the people. . . . It is remarkable, in view of the great disparity in finances and influence which has caused the failure of anti-nuclear referenda in several elections, that so many good arguments against nuclear power have been generated and publicized. It only goes to show that even in the pseudo-elitist distortion of a true democratic system such as we labor in today, the voice of the people can occasionally count for something.

JOHN E. CHAPPELL, JR.
San Luis Obispo, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his generally well-researched article, Samuel McCracken has made one extremely serious error. He indicates that plutonium (Pu) from power reactors cannot be used to make bombs, since the presence of Pu-240 in the plutonium can "cause a bomb to explode prematurely and fizzle. The original discovery of Pu-240 very nearly ended the Manhattan Project." Since Mr. McCracken is defending a plutonium economy, one in which huge amounts of plutonium will be extracted from power-reactor wastes and used to fuel other power reactors, his argument (at least as far as the dangers of terrorism are concerned) stands or falls on his claim. Unfortunately, his claim is false. The AEC demonstrated this when it exploded a bomb made from power-reactor plutonium.

Incidentally, all reactors, not just power reactors, produce Pu-240 along with Pu-239. But it is produced at a slower rate. So if substantially uncontaminated Pu-239 is wanted (for a more efficient bomb), all the operator needs to do is remove the fuel rods sooner than the three years typical of power-reactor operation.

Another point: Mr. McCracken thinks that only a nation-state can build a bomb. Yet the theory and practice of bomb building have been repeatedly described publicly. An amount of plutonium in excess

IMPORTED AND BOTTLED BY PARK AVENUE IMPORTS, N.Y.C., 52 PROOF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE an artist appears whose work is not only beautiful and utterly original, but whose vision seems uniquely suited to the taste of a particular audience of art lovers. Just such a happy conjunction has occurred in the case of the young American artist David Bennett, from whom the editors of COMMENTARY have commissioned this strikingly brilliant original print. Two hundred impressions have been made. One of them has been presented to the Jewish Museum in New York, where it now forms a part of the permanent collection. The plates have been destroyed, and no more impressions will ever be executed.

THE WORK The venerable patriarch Jacob is captured at the moment of bestowing his precious gift, the coat of many colors, on the child of old age whom he loved, as the Bible says, "more than any other of his sons." At the center, Joseph the dreamer looms monumentally as his older brothers look on in distress and envy and his father wraps the legendary robe around him.

THE TECHNIQUE In this linoleum cut, the artist has utilized a highly decorative style with simplified forms expressed in bright, flat colors. Never has the coat of many colors appeared so rainbow-like or breathtakingly vivid. By limiting himself to the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, juxtaposing and surprinting to explore their potential for richness and contrast, the artist has achieved a technical tour-de-force in which surface brilliance and depth of feeling combine to produce a work of sinuous beauty.

THE ARTIST David Bennett is a rare phenomenon. He is an American whose initial recognition has been earned abroad, and whose acclaim has turned largely on his sensitive and profound handling of religious subjects. Since his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Delfs in Munich in 1974, his work has been seen and repeatedly applauded throughout Western Europe. A typical European review extols the jewel-like effect of his work; another compares him to Chagall "in his ability to free biblical representations from crusty traditions and present them anew." Bennett's first American one-man exhibition will open next fall at the Maurice Spertus Museum in Chicago, and will travel from there to the Judah L. Magnes Museum in San Francisco, the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles, and the Jewish Museum in New York, among others.

THE EDITION A limited edition of two hundred impressions of *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* has been executed in Europe by the firm of George Andor, and these, signed and numbered by the artist, have been handsomely framed in New York City at the Gallery of Graphic Arts. The 17"x20½" printed image has been matted to 25"x30". In a gold-toned metal frame, with all-rag white mat, *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* is a work of enduring artistic value.

COMMENTARY • 165 EAST 56th STREET • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022

Please enter my order for an individually signed, numbered, and framed impression of *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* at $150, including shipping and insurance. I understand that there is a limit of one per person, and that, should the edition be sold out before my order arrives, I will be notified immediately and my payment will be returned. If not satisfied with my purchase I may send it back in good condition, well packed, and insured within ten days of receipt for full refund.

I prefer to pay as follows:

☐ By credit card (with bill issued after shipment). My order will be charged to:
☐ Master Charge* ☐ American Express
Account number _____
Expiration date _____
Signature _____
*If using Master Charge, indicate the four numbers above your name here _____

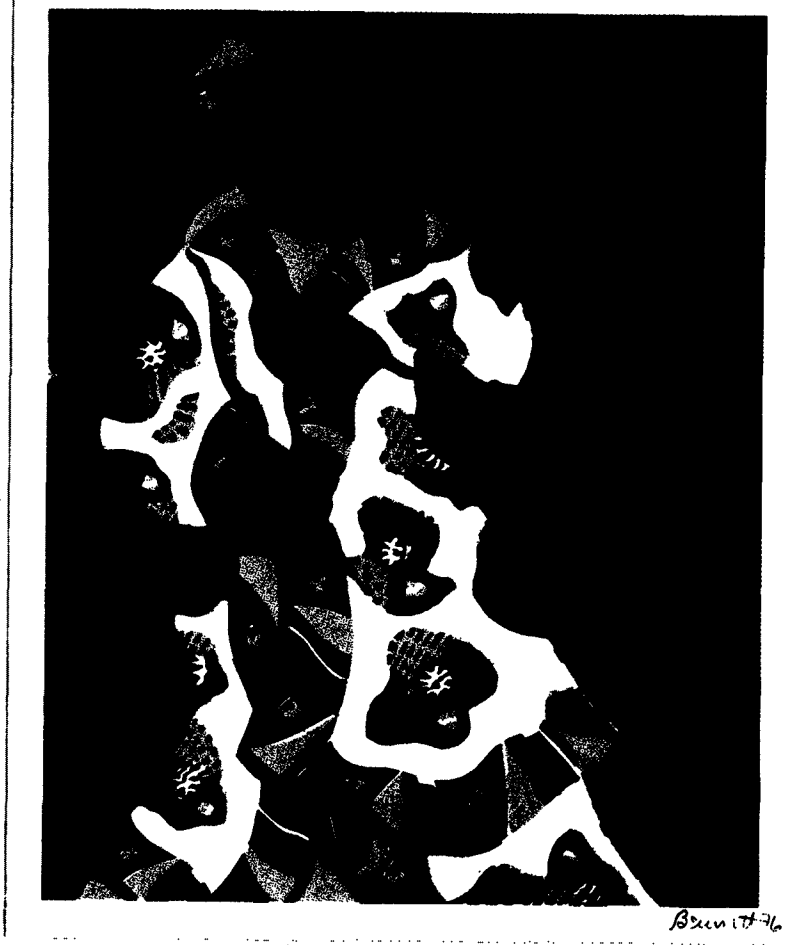
☐ I enclose my check for $150

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____

Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery

Offer good in U.S. only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Joseph's Coat of Many Colors by David Bennett

TWO HUNDRED IMPRESSIONS of this brilliant original print have been commissioned by the editors of Commentary and issued in a single, serially numbered and signed edition. Handsomely framed, they are available only to readers of Commentary and members of the Jewish Book Club, and there is a limit of one to a purchaser.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the "critical mass" has to be assembled swiftly enough so that the ensuing spontaneous explosion will not blow it apart before a vast amount of energy has been released. The simplest way to do this is using the barrel of a surplus artillery piece. Twenty pounds of plutonium is divided in half and one of the parts machined to replace the projectile. The other half is also machined, then arranged in a suitable container at the muzzle so that when the piece is fired, the two halves come together rapidly. There are more efficient methods, but the one described is sufficient to do away with a small city.

Finally, Mr. McCracken claims that plutonium will not inevitably be stolen by terrorists and used to make bombs. It is difficult to know on what he bases this faith. In the full-fledged plutonium economy he wants, there will be tons of plutonium being transported from reprocessing plants to fuel-rod plants to power plants in thousands of shipments. Experience teaches us that valuable goods like gold, diamonds, and heroin have frequently been stolen despite all safeguards. What then can we predict of a material, the possession of twenty pounds of which could enable an entire city to be held for billions of dollars of ransom? Or which to a terrorist could mean the power, for example, to have every prisoner in the country turned loose? . . .

ALBERT SANDERS
Woodside, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Samuel McCracken's article with considerable satisfaction, and I would like to add some comments on the general problem of U.S. energy policy. . . .

A realistic appraisal of the administration's energy policy . . . strongly suggests that its conservation measures are not likely to have any substantial effect on the inexorable expansion of U.S. dependence on Arab oil.

The effective way to lessen this dependence—a way that does not inhibit the economy or require belt-tightening by the citizenry, either voluntarily or involuntarily—is to increase, not decrease, domestic energy sources.

The policy of the federal government (which should be supported, incidentally, by anyone who is simultaneously interested in the fortunes of the U.S. and of Israel), is to accomplish this by vigorous expansion of the use of both coal and nuclear energy.

The quality of the President's advocacy of nuclear power has changed since the days of his election campaign, when it was to be employed as a "last resort." He has come to support expanded use of nuclear energy for the same reason every Congress and every President have since the last term of President Roosevelt: when in a position to study the alternatives, they come down strongly on the side of nuclear power. This is not a trivial point. The principle established is simply that the record of twenty years of nuclear-power generation *and* its anticipated performance in the foreseeable future are more acceptable than those of the alternatives.

You'll never guess where Lufthansa German Airlines flies to.

Germany you say? Naturally. But guess again. And again. About 100 times. Because that's how many different places you can reach all around the world on Lufthansa. 72 countries. On six continents. Just about anywhere people want to go! From Australia to Zaïre. And wherever Lufthansa flies, you have our famous service and efficiency going for you.

And most certainly, we can fly you to Tel Aviv. And we serve delicious kosher meals on your way to Israel or wherever you go. But please be sure to tell us in advance.

Ask your travel agent about us.

Lufthansa German Airlines
680 Fifth Avenue, One World Trade Center (Lobby),
New York, N.Y. 10019. Tel. (212) 357-8400

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unfortunately, nuclear power cannot do the job alone. Too much momentum has been lost in the last three or four years. Coal power—somewhat cheaper and quicker to build, but more expensive to operate in most industrial areas—must share the burden, despite its environmental problems.

Furthermore, given the great research-and-development resources in this country, it would be foolish not to pursue the development of alternative energy sources such as solar and fusion. But one should not think . . . that these potential alternatives, with their yet-to-be-disclosed difficulties, can quickly substitute for the already developed technologies. I cite the following interview in *Energy Daily* (September 14, 1977) with Michael Noland, deputy director of the newly created Solar Energy Research Institute in Golden, Colorado . . .:

> "It's probably heresy to say it, but we can and should be very satisfied as a nation if solar is providing 7 to 10 per cent of our total energy needs by the beginning of the 21st century," says Noland, a solar advocate who considers himself an optimist about its chances of becoming commercially viable. And even if the prediction that 7 to 10 per cent of the nation's energy will come from solar by the year 2000 proves true, Noland says, solar development "probably won't displace a single nuclear plant or coal-fired plant." Instead, he says, solar development is more likely "to keep our standard of living better than if it did not exist" while nuclear power and coal provide the bulk of the nation's energy supply.

Thus, those who would advocate the abandonment of nuclear power for promises of "free" energy from the sun are, in the first place, making the same mistake as those early nuclear-power enthusiasts who said that electricity generated with atomic energy would be too cheap to meter, and, in the second place, playing right into the hands of the Arabs. . . .

H. L. VENER
Marblehead, Massachusetts

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

Robert Greer Cohn's first objection seems to be that the facts do not matter—he says nuclear power is spinach, and he says the hell with it. This must be what he means by "holistic" objections.

His next objection appears to be that "humane realism" holds that it is better that hundreds of miners die in mining accidents than that a handful of non-miners die from radiation-induced cancer. Considering the comparative underdevelopment of coal mining in Palo Alto, this is no doubt a gratifying position for Mr. Cohn, his friends, and relations. His condescension to coal miners, who he appears to believe really like being crushed in pit disasters, is reminiscent of those antebellum Americans who were convinced that blacks enjoyed being slaves. At any rate, if one is killed by a falling coal seam, or by black-lung disease, or by respiratory ailments caused by airborne pollutants, the effect is "totally murderous."

Apparently Mr. Cohn has not noticed the largely bogus nature of the "split in the scientific community over nuclear peril." If Mr. Cohn wishes to dispute my claim that the majority of the scientists opposing nuclear power are not nuclear physicists or nuclear engineers or health physicists, the majority of whom support it, he should offer evidence. It will not do to assert blandly that I am wrong.

As a matter of fact, if two or three entomologists told me that my house was located over a dangerous accumulation of explosives, and twenty or thirty nuclear physicists and radiation physicians told me that not only was there no danger at my site, but the only alternative sites were very dangerous, I should be inclined to stay where I was.

I gather from Mr. Cohn's letter that he thinks scientific types are dangerous to our society, and that it is up to humanists like him to save it. As a humanist myself, I understand the temptation to think this way, but it is a dangerous habit. Mr. Cohn's indignation over nuclear power is sustainable only if my technical argument—itself the work of a humanist who is not willing to leave the question in the hands of the scientists—is false. His humanist position cannot validly exist in isolation from the technical and scientific facts, which are properly grist for the mills of the humanists, not alternatives to them.

The Caymans. Very special islands for very special people.

More doctors, businessmen, professional people come to the Caymans than anyone.

It's their kind of a place.

Three sublimely peaceful islands in the sun, down on the quiet edge of the Caribbean, where the weather is near perfect.

Still a Crown Colony with all the British traditions.

A place to relax. To enjoy simple pleasures in an uncrowded, unspoiled environment.

Miles of golden beaches. Crystal clear waters. Some of the best bone fishing in the world. Lots of tennis courts. An incredible underwater wonderland for those who scuba dive.

The hotels are not too large. Family beach cottages. Several rather plush clubs. Some very, very luxurious villas. And many think Cayman cooking is the best in the Caribbean.

An hour's flight from Miami on Cayman Airways.

Good travel agents know about the Caymans. Or write or call.

305-444-6551

CAYMAN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

250 Catalonia Avenue
Coral Gables, FL 33134

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The argument that nuclear power is useful only in thermal plants is equally cogent against coal, oil, and natural gas. And the argument that thermal power is inefficient is equally cogent against solar power. John E. Chappell, Jr.'s indignation in this regard is highly selective.

If Mr. Chappell wishes simply to declare Amory Lovins right about "soft" energy processes, there is not much I can do about it. But I should point out that proposals for major reductions in our use of electricity are not proposals for new energy sources; they are proposals for a substantial reduction in our standard of living. In a free society, such reductions would be tolerable, if at all, only if the alleged dangers of nuclear power were actual. But they are not.

The lurid allegations now sometimes made about long-distance electrical transmission are, of course, irrelevant to the source of power at the generator. A solar-fired plant would present the same problems. And it must be understood that there is no way the Northeast could derive its electrical needs from solar power except by long-distance transmission from areas with adequate sunlight and the space to collect it.

One cannot evade a non-issue, which is what the centralization of energy is. Energy producers have always been under extensive governmental control and no doubt always will be. The regulatory process has sufficient scope even for a controller of Mr. Chappell's tastes, if he would remember that it is itself democratically controlled. It is a measure of Mr. Chappell's intellectual confusion that in this passage he criticizes my doubts about the economic viability of central solar generation while ignoring my judgment that a considerable measure of decentralized solar power is likely to prove practicable.

Of course nuclear energy is non-renewable. Indeed, so is *every other form of energy*, including, in the long run, solar. What counts is the short run. The existing U-238 enrichment tails would run a breeder-based industry for centuries. If, after these centuries, a superior form of energy conversion were not developed, the remaining unmined uranium and thorium would suffice for thousands of years more.

I do not myself think that the employment issue is especially important. I would not adopt any energy source simply because of the jobs it might create. As between two more or less equally satisfactory energy sources, it would probably make sense to go with the more heavily labor-intensive. But there is at present no other source as satisfactory as nuclear.

When Mr. Chappell says that even without obstructionist tactics, the price of nuclear energy would have risen faster than that of any competing energy source, one wonders whether he has ever heard of OPEC. The cost of fuel oil has quadrupled in the last few years, and because the fuel cost of oil-fired electricity is the major component in its total cost, such increases in the cost of oil are very heavily reflected in electricity costs. In nuclear plants, by contrast, the fuel cost is a small proportion of the total cost, and electricity from nuclear plants is much less sensitive to fuel-cost increases. The fact is that in 1975, the average kilowatt from oil cost 3.36 cents; from coal, 1.75 cents; and from uranium, 1.23 cents. These figures, *pace* Mr. Chappell, *include* the cost of waste disposal.

When Mr. Chappell says that the "construction alone" of nuclear plants is more costly than that of coal plants, he ignores the fact that the fuel cost of nuclear plants is so much lower than that of coal plants as to balance, and more than balance, the higher capital costs.

When Mr. Chappell accuses me of "evading" the issue of cancers caused by uranium and plutonium use, he shows that he cannot have read me very carefully. I dealt with this subject at length, although not, presumably, to his satisfaction, since I maintained explicitly that there would be many fewer cancers per kilowatt from nuclear power than from fossil fuels. In the area under discussion, the deaths of miners, we have enough experience with uranium mining to make reasonable estimates of the death rate from cancer, which is very much lower per kilowatt than the death rate from coal mining.

If Roger Revelle were opposed to nuclear power, Mr. Chappell would no doubt call him an internationally distinguished oceanographer. Since he is not, "known nuclear advocate" will suffice to label him. The 11 degree figure quoted is fahrenheit—the centigrade equivalent would be approximately 6 degrees. It is a measure of Mr. Chappell's ignorance that he thinks a temperature rise of as little as 11 degrees fahrenheit would not be a very serious problem. I am myself an agnostic on the question of the "greenhouse" effect, and merely cited it to show the easy way in which nuclear critics sweep all contradictory evidence under the rug, just as Mr. Chappell tries to do here.

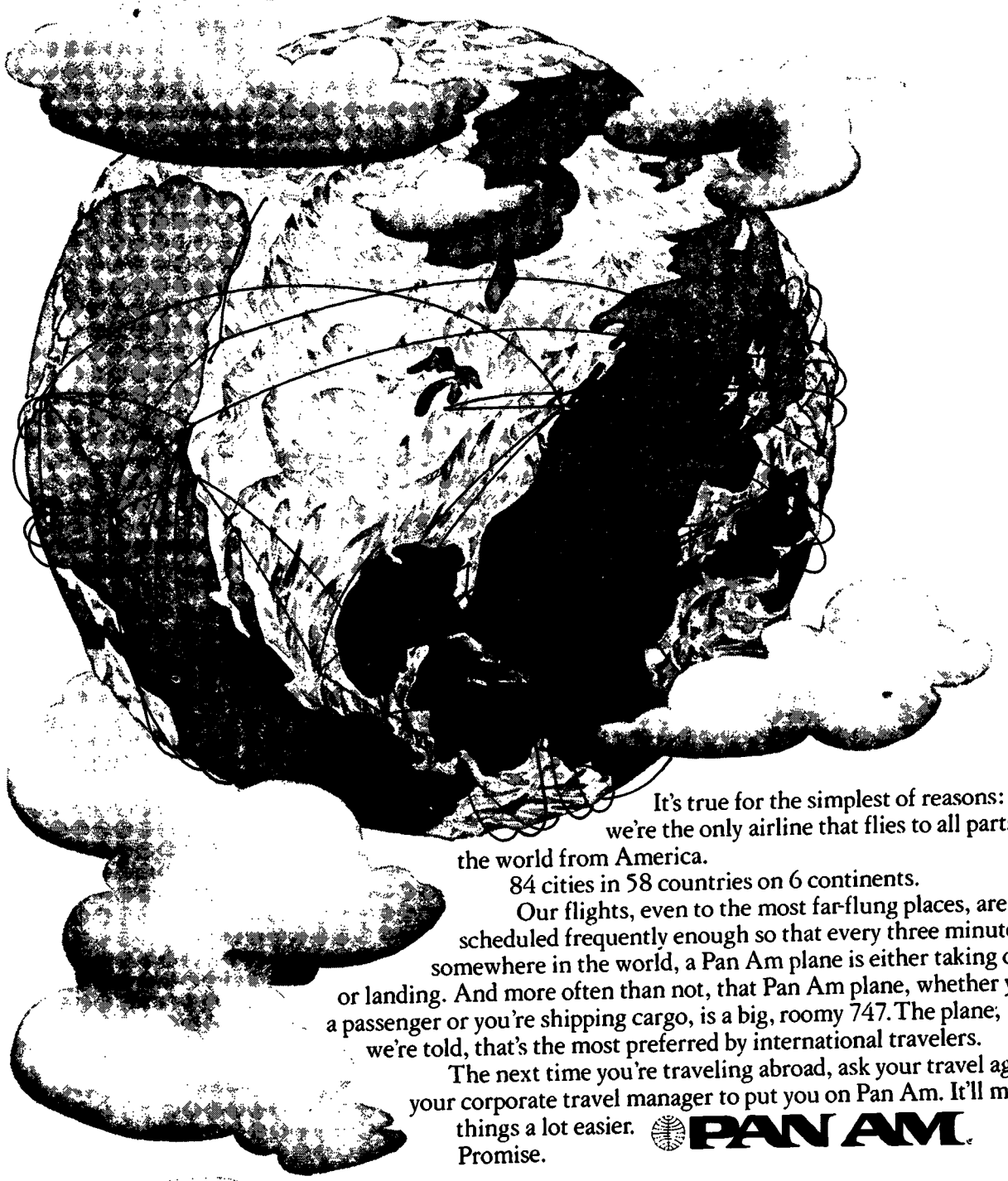
I hardly know what to make of Mr. Chappell's claim that the majority of anti-nuclear activists argue against fossil fuels. When was the last time the Clamshell Alliance occupied a coal mine or tried to shut down a coal-fired generating plant? The plain fact is that such activists concentrate all their force against nuclear power, leaving the clear impression that coal power is an acceptable replacement for nuclear power. It is also a plain fact that when environmentalists discuss coal, it is almost always to oppose strip-mining—which kills comparatively few miners—and to support the very much more dangerous practice of shaft mining.

In any event, it would not matter if the Clamshell Alliance issued daily manifestoes against coal. The Alliance's activities are aimed against the only practicable alternative to coal. Let us imagine that in the next five years they succeed in their professed goal of preventing the completion of the Seabrook plant, and it is eventually replaced with an equivalent coal-fired unit. (If it is to be replaced by anything, it will have to be fossil-fueled; not even the most enthusiastic sun-bugs predict 1250-megawatt solar plants in the near term.) That coal-fired plant, routinely operated over a thirty-year life, would kill at least a thousand and perhaps three thousand people who would not have been killed by a nuclear plant similarly operated. Those deaths would be the responsibility of all those who took part in the decision to replace a nuclear plant with a coal-fired one, but surely very heavy blame would rest with the ignorant and irresponsible activists who initiated the process.

When Mr. Chappell says that I do not place "faith" in solar, wind, or other energy technologies, he has found the *mot juste*. It does indeed require faith rather than reason to believe that any of these—or all of them collectively—can ever replace fossil or nuclear thermal plants. Mr. Chappell, it should be noted, fails to name a single solar form out of many that he alleges to be commercially feasible now, or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We're the only U.S. airline that can honestly promise you the world.



It's true for the simplest of reasons: we're the only airline that flies to all parts of the world from America.

84 cities in 58 countries on 6 continents.

Our flights, even to the most far-flung places, are scheduled frequently enough so that every three minutes, somewhere in the world, a Pan Am plane is either taking off or landing. And more often than not, that Pan Am plane, whether you're a passenger or you're shipping cargo, is a big, roomy 747. The plane, we're told, that's the most preferred by international travelers.

The next time you're traveling abroad, ask your travel agent or your corporate travel manager to put you on Pan Am. It'll make things a lot easier. Promise.

PAN AM.

America's airline to the world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any of the energy specialists alleged to know all about them and more.

Behind Mr. Chappell's allegation about MIT lies a grain of truth: one proposal for experimentation with methanol as an automobile fuel did not receive funding. What Mr. Chappell does not note is that the proposed investigator was not in energy studies, but was pursuing his hobby. Moreover, MIT has a number of research projects in the use of methanol for cars—some of them, indeed, funded by the automobile and petroleum industries.

If Mr. Chappell were a better reader, he would see that I did not call the anti-nuclear direct-action movement "anti-democratic" merely because it opposes a plant sanctioned by law. There is nothing anti-democratic about opposing the decisions of government, and the right to do so is clearly one of the essentials of democracy. I used the term because the movement explicitly claims the right to close down reactors by force merely because it wants to, and attempts to exercise this "right" in defiance of lawful majority decisions. A claim by a minority to tyrannize over a majority is about as anti-democratic as one can get.

It is wearisome to have to rehearse at this late date the essentials of civil disobedience and its undoubted place in American life. But the prevailing vulgarization of political dialogue, continued from the past decade by such as Mr. Chappell, makes it necessary. To begin with, the revolutionists of 1776 did not engage in civil disobedience: they levied war against what they regarded—rightly—as illegitimate authority. Those who were civilly disobedient along with Martin Luther King, Jr., were testing laws they believed—rightly—to be unconstitutional. However, the activists of the Clamshell Alliance simply maintain that they know better than the majority what is good for them, and openly maintain that they will use force to compel the majority to accept their superior view. If this is not elitism, I do not know what is.

It is true that the people of the town of Seabrook voted narrowly against the construction of a nuclear plant there. I wonder whether Mr. Chappell would support construction of the plant had the vote gone the other way. This is not a hypothetical issue: the people of Plymouth, Massachusetts, after some years of experience with the Pilgrim I plant, voted heavily in favor of constructing Pilgrim II. As it happens, there is no New Hampshire law giving the veto on nuclear plants to local residents. Were there such a law, and had it been held constitutional, and had the people of Seabrook then voted against a nuclear plant, that would have been, for me, the end of the matter. If, under a similar law, the people of Plymouth were to vote for a nuclear plant, somehow I doubt it would end the matter for Mr. Chappell.

Finally, Mr. Chappell displays a contempt, common among nuclear critics, for the intelligence of ordinary people. When anti-nuclear referenda fail, he tells us, it is not because the people have judged the arguments and found them wanting. That, of course, is unthinkable. Rather, the poor slobs have been persuaded to falsehood by high-powered advertising. No doubt if Mr. Chappell and his associates had been given an adequate budget, the poor slobs could have been brought around the other way. Considering the almost uniform anti-nuclear bias of the media, it is laughable to think of the anti-nuclear activists as underdogs. Mr. Chappell should try to calculate the dollar value of just one anti-nuclear documentary on PBS. But in any case, he demonstrates deeply cynical views about the capacity of the people to judge, which perhaps reflect a shallow belief in, and commitment to, democracy.

ALBERT SANDERS is in error in saying that I indicated that plutonium from power reactors cannot be made into bombs. I clearly stated my view that it is *difficult* to make bombs from reactor plutonium—i.e., I conceded it to be possible. Mr. Sanders is also in error in saying that the AEC exploded a "bomb" made from reactor-grade plutonium. The press release called what was exploded a "device," a term normally used to denote something not practicable as a bomb, possibly because its yield is very small, possibly because it is too large, or too complicated. The fact is that the government still classifies every important fact about this device except the fact that it exploded. We cannot judge its significance in the context of terrorism until the government is more forthcoming.

If an operator of a power reactor under international observation wishes to produce bomb-grade plutonium in it, he will have considerable explaining to do with regard to its abnormal consumption of uranium fuel.

If Mr. Sanders's handy recipe for a homemade plutonium bomb is really valid, it is surprising that so few nations have nuclear weapons. What is far from clear is that such a bomb can be built from plutonium rich in Pu-240—that is, the only plutonium even theoretically available to terrorists from the nuclear-power industry.

Finally, if we are to have breeder reactors, I certainly advocate very careful control of plutonium. For example, there is no reason why fuel reprocessing and fuel-rod fabrication cannot be carried on at the same site, obviating one of the shipments that bothers Mr. Sanders. Further, there is no reason why fuel rods need to be delivered to plants more often than once a year, and no reason why the same convoy cannot service a number of plants. The number of shipments a year can be minimized and the protection to shipments maximized. We are, after all, presently in the habit of shipping completed nuclear bombs around the country. The techniques used to guard them are obviously classified, but they are also obviously effective. In a plutonium economy, we could benefit from these techniques.

As I have already suggested, the sorts of threats evoked by Mr. Sanders do not require terrorists in possession of effective nuclear bombs. They merely require a public belief in the existence of such terrorists. Whether or not the anti-nuclear movement feeds this belief I will leave it to Mr. Sanders to judge.

I CAN only say "amen" to H. L. Vener, and add the caution that coal remains a necessary evil. It will, in the short term, be vital for taking up whatever slack cannot be taken up by nuclear energy. A sound energy policy will allow us to increase our use of coal as little as possible. But the environmentalists have already made sure that we will use more coal than is safe.

Spinoza

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his account of Spinoza's excommunication ["Why Spinoza Was Excommunicated," November

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1977] Yirmiahu Yovel asks: "Who in the Jewish world today might be authorized to accept Spinoza back into the Jewish fold? The Lubavitcher Rebbe? The Prime Minister of Israel? The President of Yeshiva University? The B'nai B'rith?" But what about the spiritual descendants, in the Portuguese synagogue, of those who pronounced the ban in the first place?

In 1954, when Ben-Gurion proposed an end to the ban, I went to see Salomon Rodrigues Pereira, chief rabbi of the Amsterdam community, and asked him about the proposal. "When I became chief rabbi, I accepted the rulings of my predecessors," he said sharply, shaking his head for emphasis. "No rabbinate has the right to review a decision of previous rabbinates unless it is greater in number and wiser. I don't consider myself wiser than those who came before me."

The rabbi said that if it were possible to revoke the excommunication, he still would refuse. "Consider Spinoza's works," he said. "His *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is an attack on the Jewish religion."

Sitting by as the rabbi announced his forceful stand were the members of the synagogue's governing board, headed by the rabbi's brother, Dr. Eliazar Aaron Rodrigues Pereira. The board chairman nodded his agreement with what his brother said, and the others, one after the other, expressed their approval. But while the board members sought to explain that the ban was justified in the context of the time and place in which it was pronounced, the rabbi reaffirmed his stand: impossible to revoke. "It would be just as ridiculous as trying to review the trial of Jesus," he said.

ISRAEL SHENKER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . [M]ay I congratulate Yirmiahu Yovel on his convincing essay on Spinoza's excommunication? Mr. Yovel shows much more ingenuity than the majority of Jewish scholars in debating the *herem* against Spinoza. Unfortunately, however, even Mr. Yovel accepts the traditional evaluation of Spinoza's philosophical concepts as being opposed to Judaism. As I have shown in my article, "Spinoza and the Kabbalah" (*Hartwick Review*, Spring 1967), and elsewhere, Spinoza took the

Pyramids, Pillars & Palms

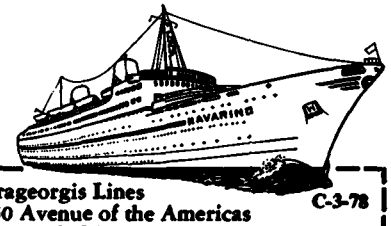
14-day cruises to the sunny southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean

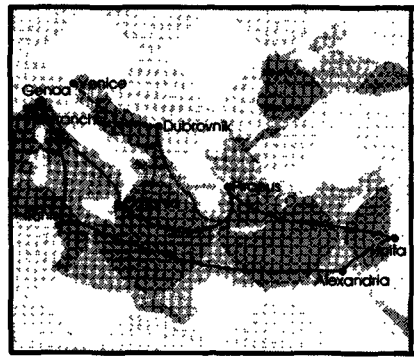
Karageorgis introduces four unique 14-day spring cruises starting March 18 plus two fall cruises starting October 28 from France or Italy to the most exotic ports in Italy, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel and Greece–all in the luxury of the Navarino, formerly the Gripsholm. There's nothing else quite like it.

You'll set out like the ancient seafarers from Villefranche or Genoa to discover the greatest achievements of the Mediterranean civilizations, from the palm-fringed, mysterious shores of North Africa and the spectacle of Egypt's pyramids to the holy city of Jerusalem and the glories of ancient Greece. All together, you experience five countries in addition to the country of departure, with seven fascinating ports. You experience all this in the luxury of the 23,000 ton floating palace, the Navarino, with all first-class outside cabins with private facilities, and the finest food the world has to offer, including special Kosher meals if desired. Rates start at $960, and we guarantee our published prices.

See an expert—your travel agent—or send us the coupon below. We'll send you our exciting and colorful 34-page brochure that will tell you more about the beauty, romance and adventure of this cruise and other fascinating Karageorgis cruises.

Special PASSOVER Cruise
April 15 to April 29
Have the most enjoyable and memorable Passover evening of your life, sailing, appropriately, from Egypt to Israel.





Karageorgis Lines
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10019
C-3-78

Yes, I would like more information about your unique Pyramids, Pillars and Palms Cruises, as well as about the other exciting Karageorgis Cruises. Please send me your 34-page full-color brochure.

Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____

Karageorgis Cruises

Greek Registry

Classical cruises in classic style.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

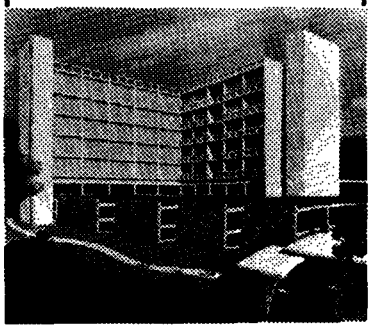
ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RESORTS ANYWHERE SALUTES THE GLORIOUS CELEBRATION OF THE HOLIDAY OF LIBERATION.

PASSOVER

CANTOR
IRVING ROGOFF
AND THE
NEVELE SYMPHONIC CHOIR
CONDUCTED BY CLIFFORD NADEL
SERVICES • SEDARIM

NEVELE

ELLENVILLE, NEW YORK 12428
DIRECT WIRE: N.Y. 244-0800
HOTEL TEL.: 914-647-6000



SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

Please include a COMMENTARY address label to insure prompt service whenever you write us about your subscription.

MAIL TO: COMMENTARY
165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you're moving, please let us know five weeks before changing your address. Place magazine address label here, print your new address below. If you have a question about your subscription, place your magazine address label here and clip this form to your letter.

ATTACH LABEL HERE

name

address

city

state zip code

main ideas of his philosophy from the Kabbalah. His identification of God with nature, which made his system suspect to traditional Jews, is one of the basic ideas of the Kabbalah, and a natural outgrowth of the most exalted talmudic tenets. As the Zohar explains, even the name of God indicates His close identity and unity with the universe. The Kabbalah's "cause of all causes," which does not have a beginning, a place, or limitations, can easily be recognized in Spinoza's "substance." . . . And Spinoza's determinism fits in perfectly well with the *Ein Sof* of the Zohar. . . .

Thus, a philosopher whose ideas are so imbued with the fundamental concepts of the Kabbalah cannot be considered alien to the teachings of Judaism or aloof from its basic tenets . . . As the findings of Gershom Scholem show, Jewish mysticism and the Kabbalah have played a much larger role than was previously believed in post-medieval and Renaissance Judaism—they are in fact a second mainstream of Jewish thinking. Spinoza was part of this trend, and perhaps this was one of the factors which caused his excommunication.

HENRY WALTER BRANN
Takoma Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Yirmiahu Yovel discusses one theory explaining Spinoza's excommunication, namely, that it was caused more by the relations of the Jewish community with the Dutch republic than by purely religious reasons. I entirely agree with this explanation, and I base my conclusion on the writings of Isaac Orobio de Castro, alias Balthazar de Orobio, a native of the town of Braganza in the Tres-Os-Montes region of Northern Portugal. . . . Isaac Orobio de Castro was the physician to the Duke of Medina-Celi; he was denounced as a heretic . . . and spent three years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, where he became a Marrano. Later, after being forcibly "reconciled" to Roman Catholicism and made to wear the *sambenito* which proclaimed his origin, he fled to France. . . . His effigy was burned in the *auto-da-fé* of 1660 at Seville; about 1662, he went to Amsterdam, renounced Roman Catholicism, and publicly became a Jew and a prominent member of the very synagogue which had "excommunicated" Spinoza a decade earlier.

De Castro was approached by Philip van Limborch, a leading religious official of the Dutch Reformed Church, and asked to write his memoirs. They were subsequently put into book form by Limborch and published . . . in Gouda in 1687. . . . The book was issued to all the Dutch Reformed Churches to show why people whose ancestors had been forcibly converted to Roman Catholicism could rightfully regard themselves as Jews—even after an interval of two or three hundred years. . . .

Though it may be considered as propaganda, the book throws considerable light on why the Sephardic Jewish community of the Netherlands may have reacted as it did to Spinoza's ideas on philosophy and religion. De Castro notes that in Spain and Portugal

> nearly all the principals in authority, the princes and nobility and commoners, are descended from apostate Jews. . . . Some subsequently suffer from the pangs of conscience, and if they find an opportunity, escape. . . . In Spain and Portugal . . . there are Bishops and observant friars, whose parents and relatives live here [i.e., Amsterdam] and in other towns in order to be able to practice the Jewish religion. . . .

Thus the Sephardim were relatively recent refugees who had to keep in the good graces of the authorities of the Dutch Netherlands. . . . Spinoza, and before him Uriel da Costa, had broken the official pledge the Sephardim had made to the Dutch government upon their arrival in the Netherlands that they would not tolerate the presence of atheists or "godless men" in their midst. The Sephardim had to conform to Dutch tradition and become, as it were, more Dutch than their Dutch hosts or else run the risk of being ruined economically or perhaps even expelled. In essence, therefore, Spinoza's excommunication was based on economic and political rather than on religious factors. . . .

Those who quietly disagreed with the methods of the authorities in these matters, secular or religious, moved to other places. Such was the group led by Orobio de Castro's kinsman, . . . Dr. Rodrigo de Castro (my direct ancestor), who moved his section of the community to Antwerp and later to Hamburg.

GEORGE SAVER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YIRMIAHU YOVEL writes:

Rabbi Salomon Rodrigues Pereira of Amsterdam has made his position on Spinoza clear on several occasions. I have a copy of a letter he wrote in the early 50's in reply to G. Herz Shikmony of the Haifa Spinozeum, who had approached him about a possible revocation of the edict of excommunication against Spinoza. In this letter, Rabbi Pereira says that almost a decade earlier, in response to a query from the U.S., he had already made up his mind to refuse; he gives exactly the same reason Israel Shenker quotes ("No *beth din* is entitled to revoke something of an earlier *beth din* unless it is greater in wisdom and in number") and concludes: "As long as I am rabbi of the said *Kehila Kedosha*, the *herem* will not be revoked."

For ths document, as well as for Chief Rabbi Herzog's letter to Shikmony, quoted in my essay, I am indebted to Mr. J. S. Hirsch of the Haifa University Library, keeper of the Spinozeum collection.

I agree that no revocation of the ban is called for, not because Spinoza attacked the Jewish religion, as Rabbi Pereira told Mr. Shenker, but because any offical revocation given today would be wholly irrelevant. Furthermore, Jewish existence today has assumed a variety of forms—a situation anticipated by Spinoza's own case and personal destiny—and there is no central authority empowered to speak for Judaism as such. This is true not only of the list of non-candidates Mr. Shenker quotes from my essay, but of the Amsterdam Portuguese congregation as well.

Incidentally, whoever insists on seeking the solution in Amsterdam should approach not the rabbi but the *parnasim*, the secular officials of the congregation. According to the statutes of the United Portuguese Synagogue, it was the *parnasim* alone who had the power to ban; and it was in fact the *parnasim* who proclaimed and signed the *herem* on Spinoza, with the rabbis only giving their consent.

Henry Walter Brann wishes to reintegrate Spinoza within Judaism in a different way, showing that he drew his ideas from the tradition of the Kabbalah. True, one of Spinoza's teachers, Menasseh ben Israel, was a devout kabbalist; and I certainly agree that the Kabbalah was historically an important and legitimate (if often suspect) stream of Jewish religious life. But equally

The most civilized hotel in New York. Maybe the world.

The Regency Hotel

Park Avenue at 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. (212) 759-4100

ROMANIA 1978

Everything everybody loves is the same. Even the prices.

They love our beautiful Bucharest

...our magnificent Carpathian Mountains

...our sun-kissed Black Sea shore

...and our painted "inside-out" monasteries.

Most of all, the world's tourists love our low prices...whether they come for fun, for sightseeing, for our health spas, or the revitalizing geriatric treatments of Dr. Ana Aslan. So for 1978, we're keeping Romania unspoiled, our warm welcome undiluted. And while costs soar everywhere else, we're keeping our low prices unchanged. Send for a FREE brochure.

ROMANIAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE
573 Third Avenue New York, N.Y. 10016 Dept. C-3

Please send FREE tour brochure and guidebook to Romania.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____

STATE_____ ZIP_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

legitimate (and still more suspect) was the tradition of Jewish rationalistic philosophy, which can be shown to have played a much greater role in Spinoza's background than the Kabbalah. Indeed, as various scholars have pointed out, the young Spinoza could have found a good many of his particular heterodox views scattered here and there in the works of former Jewish philosophers, although in their context these views still remained within the boundaries of legitimate Judaism. The important question, however, is not who influenced Spinoza most, but what he did with the influences he had absorbed; and on this matter it is obvious that the systematic body of Spinoza's thought, as he himself knew only too well, was incompatible with any accepted form of the Jewish religion (or, for that matter, with any religion based upon the notion of a transcendent creator and lawgiver).

I was pleased to learn that Orobio de Castro has a remote kinsman in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Orobio is of great importance for understanding Spinoza's background, both in the role he played as a polemicist against Spinoza and, in particular, as the childhood friend and later the opponent of Dr. Daniel de Prado, Spinoza's associate (if not "teacher") in the heretic scandal of 1656. (I think Mr. Saver will be interested to learn that a doctoral thesis on Orobio de Castro is now being completed at the Hebrew University.) But insofar as the Amsterdam Jewish community is concerned, the importance of Orobio's testimony seems to lie more in illuminating its *spiritual* situation than in indicating its politics. Indeed, the Marrano background of the community, its "split mind," the inner tension and dissent provided by those returning to Judaism after a full intellectual career as Christians in the Iberian peninsula—all these elements are present in Orobio (or can be inferred from his career). But I do not believe that they justify the conclusion that the reasons for the ban on Spinoza were purely political. Rather, they reinforce the argument, which I stated in my article, that the strongest explanation for Spinoza's excommunication is that it stemmed from the *internal* necessities of a community of ex-Marranos who were striving to rebuild their communal life within a Jewish tradition which was not part of their actual experience—and all this while the Inquisition, with all its dangers, was still at work in Iberia.

Air Force Intelligence

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his review of *The Politics of Defeat: America's Decline in the Middle East* [Books in Review, January] Michael Ledeen refers to author Joseph Churba as the "former intelligence chief of the Air Force," and again as "former head of Air Force intelligence."

In the interests of accuracy, I should point out that Mr. Churba, although a former civilian employee of the Air Force, was never the chief or the head of our intelligence agency. Prior to his resignation, he was a special adviser to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence.

The present "head" or "chief" of the Air Force intelligence agency is Major General James L. Brown, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence. He was preceded by Lieutenant General Eugene F. Tighe, who is now director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Herbert L. Wurth
Department of the Air Force
Washington, D.C.

The Catacombs, Cont.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was deeply moved by Michael Ledeen's "The Unknown Catacombs" [September 1977]. The ensuing letters in the November and January issues reawakened my interest and set me, old lawyer that I am, to pondering the question: how might we get the Vatican to alter its persistent refusal to turn over . . . the Jewish catacombs to the Jewish community?

I should like to suggest a proposal that may be more persuasive to the Vatican than any of those already suggested: a simple *quid pro quo*. The Vatican has a very great interest in Jerusalem and particularly in the places holy to Christianity and the Catholic Church. Surely the Israeli authorities have enough ingenuity to find a way to use this interest as leverage to induce the Vatican to turn over administration of the Jewish catacombs and their contents (including those items removed and/or stolen) to the Jewish community.

Elias M. Schwarzbart
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

F. S. Manor's memory [Letters from Readers, January] does not fail him. I refer him to the following passage from *History of the Jews in Italy*, by my late husband, Cecil Roth: "Indeed, from the catacomb inscriptions, mainly from the 1st-4th centuries, it would appear that knowledge of Hebrew was scanty among Italian Jews at that time, for only a few scattered and conventional phrases occur in the epitaphs. This was the case not only in Rome, but also in Venosa in the south where a considerable number of inscriptions dating from the 3rd-7th centuries have been found. Most of these are in Latin or Greek. . . ."

I do know that my husband must first have visited and studied the catacombs in the early 20's when access was relatively easy, as it was when I recall being escorted through them in 1935 by a representative of the Vatican. In 1944, my husband conducted a tour and lectured to a group of Allied servicemen in the Rome catacombs. I wonder whether Mr. Manor was present on that occasion

I, too, deeply deplore the constant reports which I receive regarding the devastation of the treasures of Italian Jewry. Only recently I was informed of the condition of the frightfully neglected museum which houses the ritual treasures in the Venice ghetto. Superb examples are portrayed in *Jewish Art Treasures in Venice* (International Fund For Monuments, Inc., New York City) which was published "in memory of Cecil Roth, historian of the Jews of Venice."

Sadly depleted as the communities of Italy now are, the responsibility for the preservation of their inheritance which has thus far so miraculously survived must be assumed by those who remain, who are morally responsible for the safekeeping of these priceless relics which have come to them from their proud and ancient lineage, and are the heritage of the generations to come.

Irene Roth
New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Empire Kosher is a whole lot more than a lot of good chicken:

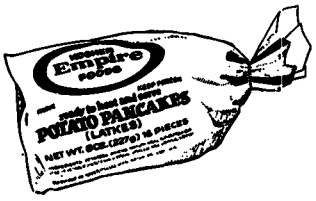
CHALLAH

BAGELS

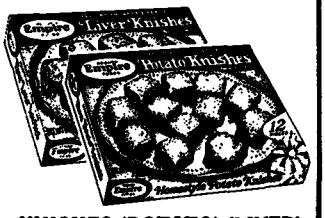
TRIANGLE POTATO LATKES

BAGEL PIZZAS

ENGLISH MUFFINS



POTATO PANCAKES



KNISHES (POTATO) (LIVER)

ENGLISH MUFFIN PIZZAS

CHOPPED LIVER SPREAD

YOGURT

POTATO ROLLS

CHEESE PIZZAS, 3-PACK

BLINTZES (CHEESE) (FRUIT)

KOSHER Empire FOODS

The Most Trusted Name in Kosher Poultry and Foods

CHEESE PIZZA, 10 OZ.

Empire Kosher Frozen Foods...all Kosher-good

Ask for Empire Kosher Foods at Kosher Butcher Shops, Food Stores and Delis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Business and the rational mind, Part II

Doughnut-watching•The virtue of dissatisfaction•The egalitarian thrust

When it comes to evaluating the performance of the American economic system, it's hard to get some people to look at the substance. They get so hung up on shortcomings that they fail to discern accomplishments. Instead of comprehending the doughnut, they become fixated on the hole.

As a result, they come out almost totally negative and conclude that we ought to scrap the whole system and rebuild from scratch. In our view, this ignores the extraordinary benefits that our system—perhaps best called "democratic capitalism"—has produced for the ordinary person over the years. It also ignores the question of what to substitute for the most dynamic, most egalitarian, and most productive system in history, despite all its obvious flaws.

We don't feel any theological attachment to the American economic system. Certainly it can be improved. And this is exactly the point: The system has improved throughout the past 200 years, no matter how unevenly, is still improving, and seems likely to keep on improving if given a chance.

The best way to gauge any system's improvement is, of course, to monitor its performance.

If you look only at the hole, you'll find that both unemployment and inflation in the U.S. are still far higher than any of us would like.

But if you look at the doughnut over the 10 years through 1977—a decade that encompassed the Vietnam war, the oil embargo, and other afflictions—you'll find this: The number of people employed in this country increased well over twice as fast as our population did.

And, as Ben Wattenberg points out in his book *The Real America*, family income in the U.S., after adjusting for inflation, has doubled in a generation, and the steady upward movement of median family income in our country has created a "massive majority middle class... something that has never happened before anywhere..."

This is not to say any of us should be complacent. On the contrary, healthy and informed dissatisfaction with the status quo has underlain much of our country's progress. But this constant progress itself has created problems: By performing economic miracles, the system has created enormous expectations and a growing desire for instant gratification of those expectations.

The key to this dilemma is partly one of timing: Our system is indeed able to work wonders when it is allowed to operate within rational, realistic timetables for change and with minimal government intervention. The problem often lies in expecting too much too soon, and this in turn often leads to well-meaning but misguided government intervention, which does more harm than good.

Most of the critics of our system agree that it is wondrously productive, though they are reluctant to comprehend that material wealth is indispensable if a society is to support such essentials as health care, education, and other social services. They fault the system on "moral" or other grounds—including, sometimes, esthetics. And they focus disproportionately on the short-term malfunctions that punctuate the system's long-term performance.

At least part of the carping at our economic system is sheer intellectual faddism; it's easier to criticize than to learn the basics of economics, which can require one to overcome deeply rooted biases. Many elitists seem to feel that in the long run our country will be better off if the decisions are made by a select few rather than by the masses of people. Since our economic system is essentially egalitarian in its thrust, elitists often appear to fear and distrust it.

Being egalitarian, the system naturally develops a constituency that is large and loyal, even if not as vocal as those bent on remaking society in their own image. If left unchecked, this tendency of people to think for themselves will almost inevitably strengthen both our economic and political systems.

This is a prospect we find it easy to live with. We believe that over any reasonable period of time the American people, no matter how much they criticize their economic system, will devote themselves more to appreciating the doughnut than to denouncing the hole in it.

© 1978 Mobil Corporation

Mobil

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Middle East: For a Separate Peace

Robert W. Tucker

SELDOM HAS a diplomatic move been subjected to as much speculation as Anwar Sadat's initiative in going to Jerusalem. The speculation has not diminished with the passage of time. If anything, it has increased with the Egyptian president's subsequent actions. Still, the speculation remains just that. It may be, as some have suggested, that Sadat himself was not altogether clear about why he was doing what he did, that at least his first and decisive move was taken on impulse and without calculation of the possible consequences. On this view, Sadat's principal motivation was simply a desire to break out of a developing diplomatic framework, largely of American design, that appeared to him to hold out far more threat than promise. Beyond this, the impulse theory maintains, Sadat did not know what he was doing, and only in retrospect has he come to appreciate the consequences of his action.

If true, it would not be the first time that impulse has led the way in diplomacy. Nor would it be the first time that impulse has led to striking results. "The greatest masters of statecraft," A. J. P. Taylor once remarked, "are those who do not know what they are doing." Perhaps. Yet the decided preference in this case has been to credit Sadat with knowing what he was doing.

Accordingly, two principal interpretations of Sadat's initiative have been developed. The first takes this initiative largely at face value; it finds the meaning of Sadat's sudden and dramatic move —and, for that matter, his subsequent moves— largely in his own explanation. Between behavior and its rationalization there is, in this instance, no great disparity. Sadat has said from the outset that his aim is a comprehensive settlement of the conflict and not a separate peace between Egypt and Israel. He has vowed that he will not retreat from a settlement based on the principles of Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines and of self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank and in Gaza. These principles, he has insisted, are not negotiable, though their implementation is. They are the counterpart to what Sadat has already committed the Egyptians to: a peace that will provide the Israelis with reasonable security guarantees and that will be based on the full normalization of relations, with all that this implies. If Israel does not agree to either or to both of the principles by which Arab interests are to be vindicated—and this, after the commitment Sadat has already made—the security argument that has served as justification for holding to the post-1967 lines and refusing Palestinian self-determination will be plainly revealed as a pretense. In such an event, Sadat has reiterated, Israel will stand condemned and will have to suffer the consequences.

On this view, then, Sadat in going to Jerusalem was not intent on breaking Arab ranks and distinguishing sharply between Egyptian national interests and the interests of the Arab nation as a whole. But this is not to say that he would spurn a separate peace if his Arab partners proved unwilling to negotiate on the basis of his principles. On the contrary, he has said on several occasions that once these principles have been agreed to, it is up to each party to implement them, "to negotiate the details." His duty to the Arab nation is fulfilled once he has gained Israeli acceptance of territorial withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines and self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs.

Did Sadat believe that by going to Jerusalem, by accepting Israel's legitimacy and sovereign independence as a nation state (and, subsequently, by accepting that peace required the full normalization of relations), he could obtain Israeli agreement to his two principles and in the form that he presented them? On this point, there is no consensus among those holding to the face-value interpretation. Some appear to think that he did indeed initially entertain this expectation. Others believe that he never rated the prospects of Israeli agreement as more than marginal. Instead, his intent from the outset was to break out of the Geneva framework that he found so unappealing,

ROBERT W. TUCKER is professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins, and the author of numerous books on foreign policy. His previous articles in COMMENTARY on the Middle East include the widely-discussed "Oil: The Issue of American Intervention" (January 1975), "Israel and the United States: From Dependence to Nuclear Weapons?" (November 1975), and "Oil and American Power—Three Years Later" (January 1977).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and even dangerous, to demonstrate Egypt's sincerity in seeking peace, and to persuade the world that it is not security that Israel really wants but Arab land.

"The world," of course, is roughly synonymous in this context with the United States. The great stake Sadat has been playing for, and playing for very skillfully, is American sympathy for the Arab cause, a sympathy that has heretofore been largely lacking. If this disposition could once be radically altered, the policy of the American government would soon reflect the alteration. At the very least, Egypt—and, indirectly, the Arabs following the Egyptian lead—could expect to receive much more favorable consideration than in the past. Quite possibly, Egypt could even hope in time to break Israel's influence in this country and to establish itself as the favored American client in the Middle East. If this goal were once realized, Israel's growing isolation would then serve as the necessary and sufficient condition for a settlement on the most favorable terms.

On the question of the risks Sadat took in going to Jerusalem, there is also no consensus. Some see these risks as very great, but others argue that they are quite modest. According to the latter group, where Sadat has gone, he can in all likelihood return, with no great damage to his position in the Arab world. After all, he has proved his fidelity to the Arab cause by remaining adamant on his two principles. He can later answer his Arab detractors, as indeed he has already answered them, by arguing that he could have made his peace with the Israelis, and on quite favorable terms, had he been concerned only with Egypt's interests.

It is true that in going to Jerusalem he recognized Israel's legitimacy and sovereign independence, the very price Arab moderates had held out for Israeli agreement to Sadat's two principles. It is also true that in the course of his trip he took some actions he need not have taken and that may well be remembered (the visits to Yad va-Shem, to the war memorial, and even to East Jerusalem), just as he made some statements that may not readily be forgotten ("Yes, we used to reject you"). But the recognition accorded Israel can always be withdrawn. Sadat may argue, retrospectively, that such recognition was conditioned on the expectation that Israel would stop behaving like an international brigand and give back territory over which it has no right. Since it has refused to do so, despite Egypt's outstretched hand, the response has confirmed the position that Israel is not entitled to legitimacy. Besides, what can Israel's other Arab antagonists do without Egypt and, assuming Sadat's continued internal support, the man who speaks for Egypt? Finally, even if the point is conceded that Sadat cannot undo everything he has done since November, that some things have changed in what had heretofore been the Arab position toward Israel, and changed perhaps irrevocably, it may be responded—as Sadat presumably would respond—that this was necessary to expose the true nature of Israeli policy to the world. Put less polemically and more candidly, such change was the price for obtaining a measure of American sympathy and support that Egypt—and beyond Egypt, the Palestinian Arabs—had not enjoyed in the past.

II

THIS is, in brief, one interpretation of the Sadat policy and, it appears, the prevailing one. Opposed to it is the view that Sadat went to Jerusalem in order to take Egypt out of the conflict and that, to achieve this end, he was prepared to make a separate peace with Israel. In one respect, this view does not differ greatly from the preceding interpretation. Here, too, Sadat is seen to have acted because he concluded that the Carter administration's Geneva vision was taking the shape of a nightmare in which Egypt would be unable to exercise any real initiative. Egypt would be tied to the Syrian-Palestinian bloc that, with Russian support, would attempt to set the position for the Arabs. The predictable result would be a stalemate from which Egypt could not possibly hope to extract any benefit. By going to Jerusalem, Sadat undertook to avoid *that* particular stalemate and to recover independence of action.

Beyond this point, though, the two interpretations are plainly divergent. The first may deal with the kind of peace Sadat was ostensibly prepared to make, but it does not really give this issue central consideration. His objective according to the first view has not been to make peace—at least, that has not been his immediate objective—but to place Israel in an apparently untenable position with its American patron and thereby to prepare the way for its growing isolation. Only at a much later stage, when Israel is finally confronted with the "choice" either of isolation from the United States or of agreeing to Sadat's principles, does the peace issue as such become directly relevant. On the second interpretation, however, the kind of peace Sadat was prepared to make from the outset is precisely the crucial issue. For if he did not go to Jerusalem with the intention of making a separate peace in all but name, then his action appears foolhardy. He could scarcely have believed that in isolation from his Arab partners, and against the bitter opposition of some, he could obtain for them what they stood virtually no chance of obtaining while preserving at least the semblance of unity.

What Sadat could have reasonably expected in undertaking his initiative was that the Israeli government would eventually offer a territorial settlement in the Sinai satisfactory to Egypt, while agreeing to make certain concessions in principle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the disposition of the other territories. He could have reasonably expected this because without it, no Egyptian government could negotiate peace with Israel and survive in power. In turn, the Israelis could have any reasonable security arrangements they desired in the Sinai, provided they ended their occupation and, in doing so, removed the most important symbols of the occupation—the settlements.

This would still leave unresolved the two principles on which a comprehensive settlement would be based. The one principle, Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, might follow the formulation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, which would leave the parties quite as free to give their respective interpretations as did the resolutions. The second principle, self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs, might be attended by such qualifications as would preclude the emergence of an independent Palestinian state for an extended period while permitting either the continued presence of Israeli security forces in the West Bank and Gaza or the right of such forces to reenter the territories under certain circumstances. What would be indispensable, though, would be Israeli agreement to the principle of self-determination, however its precise formulation might run and whatever the conditions that would attend and determine its implementation.

Finally, on this alternative interpretation of the Sadat policy, the risks the Egyptian president has incurred in the event of failure are by no means modest. The Jerusalem pilgrimage was not a provisional gesture, to be withdrawn at will if it appears to have led nowhere. The legitimacy of Israel once having been accepted, such acceptance cannot be easily withdrawn, if it can be withdrawn at all. By his words and his actions, Sadat has virtually transformed the Arab-Israeli conflict —at least as far as Egypt is concerned—into something that now clearly resembles a conventional inter-state conflict. The stakes in such conflicts may be very high, but they are still quite different from the stakes in a conflict where legitimacy itself —that is the right to exist—is at issue. To argue that Sadat may simply undo what he has done, that having legitimized Israel, he may now "delegitimize" it with no great effort, is mistaken.

These risks would be drastically reduced, and perhaps canceled out, by the strong prospect of winning the great stake of growing American sympathy and support. Even though this was not Sadat's initial motivation it could become—indeed, it would have to become—his prime objective should the negotiations with Israel prove abortive. Without significant change in American policy, Sadat would have nothing to show for his efforts and for the concessions (as they appear to his Arab critics) he has already made to Israel.

Yet the prospect of a basic shift in American policy cannot be rated strong, even after Sadat's visit to Washington in early February and the repercussions of that visit. Similarly, a breakdown of the negotiations is unlikely to occur in circumstances which would enable the Egyptians to succeed in placing responsibility for failure clearly and entirely on the Israeli side. Yet nothing less would be required to open the prospect that would compensate Sadat for the risks he has incurred. Sadat may still have to place all his chips on the American card. But in view of his unhappiness over American policy in the preceding year, and his conviction that it had been both misguided and irresolute, to suppose that this was what he intended by going to Jerusalem is to take him for a very foolish man.

III

Of these two interpretations, it is the second that appears the more persuasive. It is the more straightforward, just as it is the more consonant with the principle of minimizing one's risks. If Sadat's purpose was to isolate Israel, he was depending on a quite basic and, for this reason alone, highly unlikely change in American policy. Moreover, even should a significant change occur—not the dramatic reversal intimated by some, but still a significant change—Israel would still remain a great military threat to Egypt for an indefinite period. Indeed, with growing isolation this threat might well increase. A separate peace, on the other hand, would free Sadat to concentrate on Egypt's pressing domestic problems. The risks incurred by Arab hostility to such a peace cannot be gainsaid. But the magnitude of the risks would depend on the kind of separate peace Sadat might obtain. While it is easy to see the terms of a settlement that would be tantamount to political suicide, it is also quite possible to see the terms that might prove minimally acceptable to those Arab states (Jordan and Saudi Arabia) which matter to Egypt. Finally, it is a mistake to believe that the risk of Arab hostility is run only by the conclusion of a separate peace. Sadat, having now alienated a large portion of the Arab world, must run this risk in any event.

There is a point beyond which speculation on motives and intentions becomes not merely futile but—worse still—uninteresting. What is important at this juncture is not to continue raising questions that cannot be answered but to address perhaps the principal issue that the Sadat initiative has raised: the issue of a separate peace versus a comprehensive peace.

The preference for a comprehensive peace is not only widespread, but the case for preferring it over a separate peace is taken almost for granted. In the abstract, the preference is surely understandable; a general peace seems more desirable than a partial peace. But the issue cannot be considered in the abstract. Instead, it must be considered in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

light of the prospect of obtaining either kind of peace as well as in terms of the consequences likely to follow upon either kind of peace. One may prefer a general to a partial peace, but if the chances for a comprehensive peace are virtually nonexistent, and its pursuit jeopardizes the otherwise substantial prospect of a separate peace, the preference may be misplaced. This would be a case where a preference for the unachievable best becomes the enemy of an achievable good. Nor is this all. Whether the unachievable is indeed "best" is not self-evident. A general peace may prove unstable and of brief duration, while a partial peace may prove, contrary to expectation, solid and lasting. A preference for either kind of peace must be considered in the light of the particular circumstances attending and conditioning the conflict.

The arguments in favor of a comprehensive peace are by now familiar. Only a comprehensive peace, it is asserted, holds out the promise of bringing lasting stability to the area. A separate peace, even one between the largest Arab state and Israel, cannot do so. It must eventually unravel, whether as a result of the advantage that would be taken of it by Israel, or because of the tensions it would create between Egypt and other Arab states (notably Syria), or by virtue of the extremism it would breed among the Palestinians (at whose principal expense it would presumably be made). Nor, it is argued, would a separate peace rule out the use of the "oil weapon" against the West (and, particularly, against an increasingly dependent and vulnerable America). Finally, the point is made that a separate peace would have the effect of facilitating a Soviet reentry in force into the Middle East.

WHAT is significant about these arguments is that they do not really support the viability of a comprehensive peace. Instead, they are designed to show why a *separate* peace would *not* prove viable, or, even if viable, would lead to undesirable consequences. It turns out, then, that the principal arguments for a comprehensive peace are in fact arguments against a separate peace. But even if these considerations were well-founded, they would do little, if anything, to establish the case for a comprehensive peace. It may be that there simply is no solution—whether general or partial—to the Middle East conflict at present and that the conflict will persist until such time as the deeper structural features conditioning and defining it have changed. There is evidently much to be said for this view, with its insistence that a solution to the conflict will become possible only when Arabism as a political movement is abandoned and the Arab states increasingly define their interests in narrower, and more conventional, terms. This development, however, cannot be brought about by a comprehensive peace; it is rather the prerequisite for such a peace. Yet it might be given sudden and critical momentum by the determination of one state—the largest, as it turns out—to break Arab ranks and to distinguish more sharply than before between its particular interests and the interests of the Arab nation.

In the past, at any rate, advocates of a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict have presupposed that all parties to the conflict would have to agree upon the essential features of a settlement. The settlement might be carried out in stages over a period of years—indeed, most proposals have emphasized the necessity of gradual implementation—but the principles determining implementation would have to be reached at the outset and, to repeat, by all parties. Inevitably, this meant that the issue of Palestinian representation would have to be resolved at the start, as the efforts of the Carter administration throughout most of 1977 were to make clear. The issue could not be glossed over by procedural devices, however ingenious; it remained, for good reasons, intractably substantive. Either the Palestinians were to be represented or they were not. If they were not, or if the "representation" was too transparently a façade, the principle governing the negotiation of a comprehensive settlement would be violated and the other Arab states—or at least some of these states—would refuse to participate. If the Palestinians were to be represented, the only position the Arab states could, and did, take was that the representation would have to be, directly or indirectly, that of the PLO. For Israel, consent to such representation, whatever face might be put upon it, would have been tantamount to recognition of the PLO.

On this apparently procedural rock, the Geneva strategy was caught and, had it not been for Sadat's initiative, might well have broken up. But even if it had moved forward, there was virtually no prospect that the strategy would have achieved substantive results once the parties were finally brought together. Washington would have had to reconcile at least a half-dozen irreconcilable groups, any one of which was in a position to make a comprehensive peace impossible.

Given the many conflicting interests of Arab states, the insistence upon a comprehensive settlement is a guarantee that there will never be any kind of settlement. If the interests of all are inextricably tied to the interests of each, then a settlement is at the mercy of the most intransigent group—or the most intractable issue. Such intransigence need not even turn on an issue that directly concerns Israel. It may instead reflect inter-Arab rivalry that uses the conflict with Israel for purposes quite extrinsic to the conflict.

A truly comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires a degree of unity among the Arab states that clearly does not exist today and that holds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out almost no likelihood of emerging. It is for this reason that if, by some political alchemy, such a peace were nevertheless suddenly to materialize, it would have to be viewed as a very mixed blessing. For it could only be achieved by means (e.g., great-power guarantees) that would make it from the outset inherently fragile and untrustworthy. And it would have to be maintained within an environment—characterized by intra-Arab rivalry—that would render it constantly vulnerable. These conclusions may be ventured with reasonable assurance even while discounting the Russians as a party to a comprehensive settlement. But the Russians cannot be discounted, since quite apart from their own insistence on being included, at least one of the parties to a comprehensive settlement may be expected to insist on Russian inclusion. Thus, a great power whose influence in the area has largely depended upon the persistence of the conflict now must be expected to support a settlement that promises to render its influence negligible.

IV

ARE THE arguments urged against a separate peace persuasive? It is useless to pose the question in the abstract. A separate peace today presumably must mean a peace between Egypt and Israel. Suppose, however, that although Egypt and Israel are the principal parties to a peace, it is necessary and desirable to include Jordan as well—necessary since without Jordan the problem of the Palestinian Arabs cannot be satisfactorily addressed, and desirable since with Jordan the peace can be presented as no longer separate. At the same time, the Syrians are left out, though the general principles agreed to by Egypt and Israel are applicable to Syria. The PLO is also excluded from the negotiations and given no standing in the provisions reached respecting the West Bank and Gaza. Nor are the Palestinian Arabs a party to the negotiations in any meaningful sense, but instead are objects of an agreement reached by the three parties.

This is, as everyone knows, the general pattern the present negotiations are taking, and the only pattern that appears to hold out the prospect—it is no more than that—of positive results. If it were to materialize, would we have here a separate peace—or at the very least, the functional equivalent of a separate peace? The parties, along with the American government, may be expected to answer negatively. But the private observer has no need to deny reality. We would have a reasonable approximation of a separate peace.

This may be said without indulging in speculation over the more detailed provisions of the settlement. The general outlines of a possible peace are another matter, but they are already reasonably clear. In the Sinai, the Israelis would have to accept the principle of full withdrawal from Egyptian territory and in consequence concede on the issue of the settlements there. Without such concession, there appears to be no way that Sadat could justify an agreement even at home. He has already made the removal of Israeli settlements in the Sinai a point of honor; having done so, he can concede the issue only at the very great risk of destroying his entire position.

Elsewhere, the satisfaction of Sadat's two principles will require, at the very least, the reaffirmation of the relevant United Nations resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 (thus leaving open the issue, as did the United Nations resolutions, of the precise extent of the withdrawal) and agreement to a regime respecting the West Bank and Gaza that holds out the *possibility* of an independent Palestinian state at some future point. However artful and delphic the formulation of the principle in which the latter agreement is cast, there can be no escape from this possibility. At least, there can be no escape other than by a formula that would be, and would be seen as being, an obvious sham. The implementation of the principle may effectively deny the Palestinian Arabs self-determination for an extended period. It is very difficult to see an Israeli government—any Israeli government—agreeing to a scheme of implementation that would not do so. But the principle cannot embody such denial if Sadat, and Hussein, are to agree to it. And since principles, once solemnly agreed to, have a life of their own (as the Israelis, considering the Balfour Declaration, might appreciate), for this reason alone the possibility of a Palestinian state in the future must be taken seriously.

There is no known scheme of implementation that can elicit the agreement of the interested parties yet be safely relied upon to preclude indefinitely the possibility of an independent Palestinian state. Nor is one likely to emerge. Provisions permitting the Israelis to retain military forces in the West Bank and Gaza, without limit of time, might prove a reliable form of insurance. But Egypt and Syria cannot be expected to agree to this. Anything less—for example, a right of reentry under certain circumstances—already leaves open the possibility that is presumably to be prevented. The same must be said, though with far greater emphasis, for proposals in which a "Palestinian entity" is "linked to Jordan." If Jordan is the effective sovereign over the West Bank, that is one thing. If not, it is quite another.

THE crux of the matter is simply this: who will have ultimate security control over the areas—in fact, if not in form? If the answer is that no one party will have ultimate control, then whatever arrangements are made will be dependent upon the mutuality of interest and the good faith of the parties entering into them. Yet it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is supremely difficult to gauge the depth and reliability of mutual interest on the Palestinian question. And it hardly needs pointing out that there are limits to the trust that the parties may be expected to entertain of one another after so long a period of mistrust and hostility.

Thus, the obstacles in the way of a settlement that is minimally acceptable to the parties are formidable. Whether Egypt, and Jordan, will be satisfied with a solution to the Palestinian problem that leaves an Israeli military force in—or with access to—the areas for an extended period cannot be foreseen. Nor is it useful to speculate whether Israel will accept a solution that holds out the possibility of an independent Palestinian state. Even if these obstacles are overcome, others remain. Not the least of them is posed by the disposition of Palestinian Arabs in other states, and principally in Lebanon. And looming over differences that will be bridged only with great effort is the intractable of intractables—Jerusalem. It seems altogether doubtful that all of these issues can be resolved at present. The peace that may come in the near future can only be a partial peace—partial with respect to the parties entering into it, the issues that it addresses, and the manner in which it addresses them. Even so, it would signal an effective end to the Middle East conflict in the form in which we have known it for three decades.

This conclusion falls far short of the expectations nourished by those committed to a comprehensive peace. It suggests that even a separate or partial peace can succeed only if it does not place too great an initial strain on the trust each party is expected to give and the risks each party can be expected to take. These risks do not fall evenly on the parties, and it is hypocritical or simply obtuse to pretend otherwise. The party that will have to take the greatest risks with its security is Israel. This is inevitable given Israel's strategic situation and the fact that no peace will prove possible unless Israel surrenders strategic assets. It may be that such surrender will be well repaid. But even if true, this does not affect the point that the principal risks will be Israel's and that if an agreement is to be reached—even a minimally acceptable agreement—these risks are bound to prove considerable.

In some measure, this point goes unappreciated today because so many in this country have come to equate Israel's security with its legitimacy. They have come to do so, in part, because the Israelis themselves have taught them to do so. Now, with the new Sadat policy, the time of reckoning has arrived and the consequences of emphasizing that misleading equation—misleading because oversimple—must be faced.

Israel's security problem can be significantly altered through acceptance by the Arab world, but it cannot be resolved. The strategic realities of Israel's situation cannot be spirited away by Arab good will. Though surely moderated by good will, they will nevertheless remain, and will have to be dealt with in roughly the manner any nation would seek to deal with comparable realities. In this respect, there is a gratuitous note struck—from President Carter down—in the insistent prompting that the Israelis be "courageous" and "take risks for peace." It is always easy to be courageous and to take risks with other people's security problems. Those who strike this pose toward Israel might reflect on the fact that it has taken over a decade for this country to summon up the "courage" and "take the risk" to return control over the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, though not before the year 2000 and not without insisting on ever additional guarantees for safeguarding American interests. And as between the security significance of the occupied territories to Israel and the Panama Canal to the United States, no extended comment seems necessary.

THE arguments against a separate peace have still to be directly answered. In part, the objection to such a peace simply reflects the continuing obsession with treating the Arabs, and thus the conflict, as an undifferentiated whole. This is the basis for the insistence that a separate peace must eventually unravel. It may do so. Any peace may do so. But if it does, it will happen primarily because the parties to the agreement allow it to happen and not because they are unable to prevent it. The rejectionist Arab states cannot seriously threaten a separate peace. Syria and Iraq together might represent a serious threat, but the prospect of their reconciliation seems as remote as ever. Nor does Syria alone pose a serious threat. Its persistence in opposing a separate peace would not be received with unhappiness in Cairo. Sadat has no interest in furthering Syrian interests. If anything, he has a substantial interest in containing Assad's ambitions in Lebanon and elsewhere.

The greatest threat to the durability of a separate peace is often held to be the Palestinians. A peace that stopped well short of self-determination for the Palestinians, the argument runs, would create a degree of instability, by virtue of their growing radicalization, that would in turn render peace untenable. The danger of radicalization in the absence of self-determination cannot be denied. At the same time, the easy assurance that self-determination would lead to a moderate leadership is hard to understand. The Palestinians have more than one reason for radicalization. Perhaps if all of their irredentist claims were satisfied, these reasons would disappear. But the results of this need not be labored. There may be no reliable way to prevent the eventual emergence of a Palestinian state (though one not dominated by the PLO); to permit this now, however, would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very likely, in and of itself, quickly unravel a separate peace. What the parties to a settlement need above all in the initial period is a stability that further alleviates residual fears and permits them to develop working relationships marked by growing confidence and trust. They could not have this with a Palestinian state.

The fear that a separate peace will afford the Soviet Union the opportunity to reenter the Middle East in force can be dealt with summarily. The Soviets are very likely to retain their influence in Iraq and Libya no matter what happens. The one country that might well move much closer to Moscow is Syria. It does not seem an exorbitant price to pay.

The view that a separate peace will not blunt the "oil weapon," that it will not relieve us of continuing anxiety over the prospect of disruption of supply, may well be true. But what *will* solve the oil problem short of the cessation of dependence through development of alternative sources of supply? Certainly, it is naive to believe that a comprehensive peace, were it attainable, would do so. The disappearance of all traces of the Arab-Israeli conflict would not insure stability in the area. It might only unleash other latent and not so latent conflicts which pose a greater threat to our sources of supply. At bottom, anxiety over the reliability of these sources, and the fear of doing anything that might lead to their disruption, is based on a niggardly conception of American power. It was this conception that contributed to the oil problem in the first place, and it is the same conception that maintains our anxiety today. Those who are obsessed with the problem in relation to a separate peace might benefit by asking themselves: who are the Saudis more afraid of, those supporting such a peace or those opposed to it? The answer to this admittedly crude question is still the only answer that matters.

One final word. I have deliberately refrained from discussing the tactics attending the kind of agreement outlined here. But one general point must be made, and in the form of an admonition to the United States. The negotiations can only be jeopardized by an attempt to force their pace. Since it is the Israelis who are being asked to take the major risks with their security, they must be given time to consider, to examine, to discuss. Since, moreover, Israel, in contrast to Egypt, is a democratic country, the Israelis have the problem—with which we, as a democratic society ourselves, have a special responsibility to sympathize—of developing a national consensus prepared to make difficult and dangerous concessions for the sake of a peace that will stand a decent chance of holding up for more than a token length of time. If the United States insists on pushing Israel too hard too fast, the chance of achieving this goal will in all probability be lost.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Among the South Africans

Dan Jacobson

THE FLIGHT. On the plane from London to Johannesburg there were no fewer than two relations of mine, neither of whom I had ever seen before. I was introduced in the departure lounge to one—a little boy going to spend a holiday with his grandparents—by the people who were seeing him off. The other I sat next to during the flight. He was full of curiosity about me; his questions began from the moment he was permitted to undo his seatbelt. Where did I live? Was I going to South Africa on vacation? Had I been there before? When had I left? Did I *really* prefer living in England? Finally he took the plunge and asked me my name; when I gave it to him, he immediately wanted to know exactly which Jacobson family I belonged to. The Jacobsons from Pretoria? Or the Henry Jacobsons? Or Jacobson the writer? I confessed that I was actually the last of these. He stared incredulously at me, and then turned to his wife, who had so far taken no part in the conversation. "Darling, we're sitting next to your cousin the writer."

At Nairobi my wife and I got out for a breath of air. My new-found cousins refused to leave the plane. "They treat South Africans like dirt here," they explained. (In fact, the Kenyans could not have known who was or was not South African among the passengers, for they did not look at the passports of anyone going into the transit lounge.) Thus we missed the drama which took place on the plane during the layover. Apparently a passenger had had a stroke or seizure of some kind on the way to Nairobi, and a doctor and two nurses had been warned to stand by to receive him. When they came to take him off, however, he would not leave. The pilot refused to fly on with so sick a man on board. Eventually four policemen entered and carried him off bodily—shouting, kicking, and flailing his arms. The South Africans on the plane were convinced that he was resisting so violently because he had a South African passport and was terrified at the prospect of being left behind in a black country. Other passengers claimed that he did not know where he was or what he was doing, and that there was no political significance of any kind to his frenzy. All we saw of the incident when we returned to the plane was a closed ambulance and a nurse in earnest conversation with a policeman. Then on to Johannesburg.

* * *

ARRIVAL. The police were more in evidence at Jan Smuts airport than on previous landings, so far as I can recall, and more heavily armed: the submachine guns some of them sported were a novelty. For the rest, no change. It was very hot. Outside the terminal building, under a high African sky, rows of parked cars quivered in the January heat. Sun-fatigued bluegum trees lined the way to a greenish Holiday Inn. Factory buildings on both sides of the main road all looked new, brash, desultory: somehow it seemed easy to imagine them *not* there. But the northern suburbs of the city were more woody, more leafy, more graceful, more embowered, than ever. Each house stood back, almost hidden from its neighbor. The lawns were immaculate. Overalled African house-servants stood on them, spraying flower beds from hissing hoses. Bougainvillea, hibiscus, and plumbago were in flower; the last of the jacaranda blooms were still on the trees. The avenues and gardens were also planted with oaks, planes, sycamores, hedges of honeysuckle; and it was the combination of the tropical and the temperate which for some reason was so moving and so restorative. The overwhelming impression was one of peace, spaciousness, and emptiness. People were few and far between.

The first words said to me by blacks, at the airport: By a woman, when I was looking for a lavatory, "This way, master." By a man, as I was leaving the building, "Yes, baas." No change there, either.

At a friend's house, during our first meal, much of the talk was of the army call-up. One young man there had just received his papers; he would be in the army for the next two years, with the prospect of another year's service in the reserves after his discharge. A second, who had already done his stint, had just been instructed to report for a three-months' tour of duty in South

DAN JACOBSON, born and raised in South Africa, has made his home in England for many years. He is the author of several novels, including *The Beginners, The Rape of Tamar, The Wonder-Worker,* and, most recently, *The Confessions of Josef Baisz,* to be published by Harper & Row in the fall.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

West Africa (Namibia), on the Angolan border. Both young men were deeply depressed at the prospect. A third youngster present said that he was going to leave the country before his papers came. The one who had already been in the army described his last spell on the border: patrolling, laying ambushes, taking part in sweeps through the bush. His unit had made no contact with the guerrillas of the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO).* All they had seen one night were some flares from across the border ("like fireworks"). But his period there had been the best of his service: "At least we'd had something to do."

The latest extension of the period of national service for new recruits means that the South African army is going to double in size over the next few months. Only whites, of course, are drafted.

* * *

SOME POTTED POLITICAL HISTORY. When the Afrikaner Nationalists came to power in South Africa thirty years ago, they took over with two intentions. One was to insure the dominance of their language and culture vis-à-vis the English-speaking whites; the other was to see to it that the white man in general, and the Afrikaners in particular, would continue to keep in subjection the country's blacks, Coloreds (mulattoes), and Indians. The slogans that were shouted by Afrikaner crowds at meetings when I was a student had none of the refinements that were later to be enunciated by upholders of the policy of apartheid, especially when speaking to audiences abroad. ("Separate freedom," "mutual respect," etc.) In those days, the voters called for *Wit man bô* and *Kaffer op sy plek* (White man on top, Kaffir in his place); and that, pretty much, was what successive Nationalist administrations did their best to give them. With extraordinary thoroughness and zeal, they set about caging the races from one another: striking down whatever rights of representation the "non-whites" then had; turning the haphazard but entrenched practices of racial discrimination that already existed into a pattern of punitive legislation which governed everything from post-office entrances to areas of habitation for the different races, or from the kind of job you were permitted to take to the kind of person you were permitted to marry. All this was done on the basis of an avowedly racist ideology, which owed at least some of its inspiration to Nazi Germany, and which looked on any form of racial mixing as self-evidently dangerous and deplorable. In the course of setting up and putting into operation this apparatus of segregation, the government gave itself powers which effectively undermined many of the institutions inherited from the period of British rule, the judiciary not least among them.

It took the Nationalists almost thirty years, as I say, to do all this. (Other independent African states have of course dealt far more summarily with their judiciaries—and with their press and parliaments.) During those decades, liberal whites inside South Africa, and practically everybody outside South Africa, continually told the Afrikaners that what they were doing was wrong, wicked, wholly unacceptable in the eyes of all truly modern and enlightened people—and, above all else, self-destructive. I too, in my own way, added my voice to that chorus. For the most part, the blacks suffered what was being done to them in silence.

And now? I will make three points only here—not so much to get them out of the way as to let them serve as background to what follows.

1. The Afrikaner Nationalists, who prided themselves on their anti-British (and hence "anti-imperialist") past, did not realize how much they depended upon the power of the white man elsewhere in Africa, and on that of the British and Portuguese in particular, for the maintenance of their own position.

2. Because this realization has sunk in, now that everybody else has gone home, the Nationalist leadership has abandoned what can be called the *ideologically* racist dimension of its policy: i.e., that aspect of it which regarded the presence of the black man, other than in strictly defined work roles, as nothing less than a form of pollution, a source of mystico-physical disgust. So far as I could see—and I read the Afrikaans press quite industriously while I was in the country—the leaders have turned around 180 degrees in this respect. (And, what is more, they have done it without a word of explanation to their followers.) They now speak with lofty disapproval of *rassisme* and *geskeidenheid* (discrimination), and announce with a curious mixture of pride and ill-disguised reluctance that they are taking this or that step to "normalize" (their word) this or that sporting event or public facility. (To an outsider, the changes that have taken place as a result may seem pitifully inconsequential; but anyone who remembers the South Africa of even five years ago will be startled to see black children swinging on swings in the public parks, or an Indian family eating a meal unhindered in an open-air restaurant.) However, the determination of the Afrikaners to keep effective political power in their hands, and the mass of the blacks at a great social distance, remains unaltered.

---

* South Africa has ruled over Namibia since the territory was wrested from the Germans during World War I. Negotiations about its independence are now going on with various interested parties—including the United States, which has been trying to mediate between the South Africans and the militant SWAPO. South Africa wants to make sure its troops will have the right to remain there after independence; SWAPO, unlike some of the other black organizations in the territory, refuses to accede to this demand.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

3. We were wrong in the prophecies of doom we made about the Afrikaners thirty and twenty and fifteen years ago. This is a fact that has been kept well hidden from the public outside South Africa, though it is hardly a secret to the Afrikaners themselves, or to the considerable numbers of English-speaking whites who for the first time supported the Nationalist party in the last election. Whatever the future may hold for South Africa—and it is certainly going to be very different from the past—the Nationalist party has in fact given its own people the best decades in their history. There can be no question of it. They have transformed themselves from a poor, rather backward, rural or semi-proletarian people, with no real source of economic strength outside agriculture, into the rulers of a prosperous, efficiently run, highly developed, and industrialized country. The "poor whites," who abounded in my childhood, have wholly disappeared; even those Afrikaners who continue to fill the more lowly of "white" occupations (ticket collectors, petty civil servants, bus drivers) have become middle class in their habits and expectations. The Afrikaans universities and cultural institutions have grown enormously in size and influence; Afrikaners have for the first time taken high positions in the mining corporations, finance houses, and heavy and light industries. All this—and undivided political power too! All this—and their own flag, the severance they had always longed for from the British monarchy, and their language recognized as the prime language of government (if not yet of commerce). No wonder they have never wavered in their loyalty to that government no matter how much it may be reviled abroad. And no wonder they do not want to give up a single one of their gains. Indeed, another secret aspect of what has been going on in South Africa is that it is precisely the apartheid system, with its need for an elaborate bureaucracy and police, which has provided tens of thousands of Afrikaners with jobs, and has thus enabled them to rise rapidly in earning power and self-esteem.

So why should they believe us now, when we tell them yet again that they are disaster bound?

The funny thing is, they do.

* * *

JOHANNESBURG SUBURBAN SUNDAY. A profusion of scents and light; Namaqua doves in the trees cooing long and short, in a sweet Morse code of their own invention. A drive through empty streets, all so luxuriantly befoliaged, yet all kept so neat by the African servants who now litter the place with their bodies, lying on the grassy pavements they themselves have mown: men in overalls, women in smart Sunday clothes. At the end of every northern vista, great thunderclouds are building up—purple and white, mauve and silver. But there is no wind. The sky glitters. From behind hedges and trees one hears the noise of much tennis playing (pluck-pluck-pluck-*Ah Jesus!*) and the splash of bodies plunging into swimming pools.

The cousin I have come to visit is out: away on vacation. In the drive in front of his house is a broken-down car, with two young men leaning over its engine. Inside the house a tall thin girl, with a mass of fair hair over her eyes and down her shoulders, is busy pouring orange juice into a jug. She wears a black bra and a pair of tiny white shorts, which show off to advantage the length of her legs. These people are all strangers to me; apparently they have been temporarily loaned the house by the people who are looking after the place. Of the two young men, one wears a black T-shirt and has his hair cut in sphinx-like shape; the other, despite his sandals and oily hands, is faintly professorial in appearance, having a goatee on his chin and glasses on his nose. It turns out that he is an American, from Chicago, who has worked his way down the African continent, from Egypt southward, by doing one-man street performances of Shakespeare with puppets of his own manufacture. Indeed, there is an item about him in one of the morning papers, together with a photograph of himself and his Lady Macbeth puppet. He shows this to me with some pride, but also with some disgust—he's on the point of leaving for Cape Town, and only now do they write about him in the paper! However, he and his friend are more preoccupied by their car than by the question of publicity: most of the oil has leaked out of the oil pan and they don't know what to do, as all garages and gas stations are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, as part of an energy-saving-and-preparation-for-sanctions campaign. After some telephoning, they manage to find someone who has a can of oil in his house, and they drive off to get it. The girl goes with them. By this time she has put a white shirt over her bra.

I am left with the newspaper given to me by the peripatetic puppeteer. On another page there is an item headed "Half-Naked Patient Scandal." It describes how a Dr. Theo Fairly conducts examinations on female black "workseekers" on behalf of Edenvale municipality. (Dr. Fairly of Edenvale: what names!) The women are completely stripped in one another's presence during the examination. Dr. Fairly sees nothing wrong with this procedure. "Natives are more communal, and don't mind," he explains. The Sunday *Times* waxes very indignant over this utterance: doing good, exposing an abuse, and producing a salacious story, all at the same time.

(As a result of the report, Edenvale municipality announced a few days later that it was going to spend 800 rand* on providing curtains and cubi-

* One rand=$1.15.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cles in the room where the examinations take place.)

* * *

THE MEDIA. Contrary to what many people abroad imagine, the South African press does not at all resemble that of, say, the Soviet Union. The English-language press is hostile to the government's internal policies and has strong reservations about its policies elsewhere in Africa, and it does not hesitate to say so vociferously. Even the Afrikaans press, which is essentially part of the government machine, occasionally expresses delicately phrased criticisms of aspects of current policy. The real paradox of the press in South Africa, *which I have never seen anyone remark upon, is* that the regulations governing publication appear to permit a greater freedom of comment than they do of the reporting of facts. A friend who holds a senior position on one of the Johannesburg dailies told me it was "a nightmare" trying to keep within the laws that lay down what could or could not be reported about incidents of interracial violence, or conditions in prison, or the activities of "banned" persons. The risks that journalists run are considerable, as has been shown by the number of black reporters who have been arrested; or by the cases of Donald Woods, formerly editor of the East London *Daily Despatch,* who is now in exile, and of Percy Qoboza, formerly editor of the black newspaper, *World,* now in jail.

By contrast, the official radio and television news services are completely subservient to government policy. The television service, while technically of high standard, is of interest for one reason only: as an illustration of the extraordinary insensitivity of the government in its dealings with the majority of the country's inhabitants—or perhaps I should say of the extraordinary intensity with which it clings to its own unrealities. Though 80 per cent of the country's population is black, you simply never see a black face on the television screen, outside of the occasional news program or documentary (from which they can't be entirely excluded, because they do, after all, walk about in the streets). Blacks, or Coloreds, or Indians never appear on the variety shows, the panel games, the plays, the serials; their opinions are never canvased in programs on economic affairs or on the dangers of pollution. As far as the television service is concerned, they just do not exist.

* * *

JOHANNESBURG SUNDAY (CONTINUED). The center of town was deserted; everything closed. The general impression was one that combined in curious fashion tawdriness and bleakness. No open spaces; no monuments of any consequence; no river; no striking natural features; only narrow streets with buildings crammed on too-small plots, and plastered with advertising signs. One is inevitably reminded of a medium-sized American city; indeed, all over South Africa one is reminded far more of the United States than of Europe. Yet what can be called the palette of colors, from sky to brickwork, is different; distinctively African. Here and there bits of old "colonial" Johannesburg still remain: some twiddly Victorian façades, some faintly Delhi-like buildings, with colonnades, and palm trees planted squarely in front of them. (Though the inevitable corrugated iron roof above rather spoils the effect.)

Driving beneath an overpass, through the old vegetable market—now being tarted up into *theaters and artists' studios, etc., like other old* vegetable markets all over the world—we came into a battered but much more populous area. Only Africans were to be seen here. Evidently one of the black, separatist, "Zionist" churches had been holding an open-air meeting of some kind, and now the congregants were streaming toward the buses that would take them home. (These churches are universally called "Zionist," by the blacks themselves, incidentally; despite the obloquy heaped on "Zionism" at the UN and elsewhere, this appellation remains unchanged.) The men wore khaki jackets, with metal stars and small ribbons on their lapels; the women were gorgeous in long white skirts and red or green blouses with mystic letters and symbols embroidered upon them. All of them were healthy looking and walked with a fine stride; some were singing. None of them so much as glanced at us. (This invisibility conferred on me by my white skin was something I was to become more familiar with later.) The only other interlopers among the blacks were occasional carloads of rather apprehensive-seeming Indians, family groups coming home from their Sunday drives. They certainly did stare curiously at us, in striking contrast to the Africans.

In an indescribably rundown area of disused railway lines, abandoned workshops, nameless sheds, potholed pavements, boarded-up shops, dead-end streets, and a few drunken blacks squatting motionless on street corners, my guide stopped his car. We had halted in front of a narrow, box-like structure two or three stories high. Some of the windows in front were broken; to the right there was an iron gate, with wheels along the top, that looked as if it hadn't been rolled open for years. Down one side of the building, which was painted in an awful pale blue distemper, ran three-dimensional letters of yellow plaster, in art-deco style. They spelled out: THE CRYSTAL CREAMERY. It was the business my father had owned when I was born.

I have no recollections of ever having seen the place before; he had sold the business just before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my fourth birthday, and then moved his family down to Kimberley. But I do have vivid memories of *his* recollections of that period—which he always spoke of as the very worst of his adult life. He had taken the business over at the depth of the Depression; credit was impossible to get; customers were few, and never paid their bills; the machinery constantly broke down; a child died.

* * *

PILGRIMAGE. A few days later I visited yet another of the many places in which my father had lived and worked before I was born. This one, too, I had never seen previously. Driving across the Western Transvaal to the newly established Republic of BophutoTswana (of which more below), I stopped the car at a small railway station called Bodenstein. My father had kept a store there for a year or two, before World War I.

The place had obviously changed little since his day. Here was the small station building; here an abandoned, boarded-up shop, with a little stoop and an awning in front of it, which I assumed to have been his; there a couple of railwaymen's cottages. There was a newer, larger, slightly smarter store farther down the dirt road—still the only shop, on the only road, of which Bodenstein could boast. There was also a giant grain elevator next to the railway line, which had certainly not been there in his day.

For miles we had been traveling through prosperous corn fields, each tall green row that stretched away from the road turning, with our passage, like the spoke of a wheel. My father had tried his hand at growing corn, too, in that district; he'd grown impatient with the shop and taken to farming instead. But drought had beaten him; then the war had broken out, and he had gone into the army.

Anyhow, all his vicissitudes had ended in the Kimberley Jewish cemetery, which I also visited later. It was very hot: as hot as only Kimberley in the summer, in January, can be. Tall cypresses scented the air, and threw black shadows straight ahead of them. The earth was parched. Tombstones all around bore names I could remember from my childhood: people I had seen in *shul*, or standing in front of their shops, or driving in their cars to visit their patients, or waiting for the show to begin in one of the town's two movie houses, on a Saturday evening. All silent now. Harvested. When I had read about the "organic community" as a student, and had conscientiously bewailed its loss, it had never occured to me that these people, from whose company I had fled, constituted as much of a community as I was ever likely to know.

* * *

THE MOOD. To say that most of the people I spoke to were apprehensive or pessimistic about the future is to put it moderately. In fact, some of the talk about imminent "revolution" I heard struck me as positively self-indulgent—especially when it came from people sitting in air-conditioned offices in smart executive suites, or dabbling their feet in their swimming pools, in the midst of green acres. It even occurred to me that some of those people would find the boredom and guilt of their lives intolerable if they weren't sustained by the thought of the revolution ahead.

Of course I am speaking here about a particular class: wealthy, Englsh-speaking, Jewish in some part, professional, intellectual. Why they feel guilty perhaps needs no explanation at this stage. But the boredom? Well, their wealth, their tastes, their sense of what they are entitled to, their travels abroad, all make them hanker after something other than the banal, narrow, provincial culture available to them. That the culture can be described in these terms is due not only to the country's geographical isolation, its colonial past, and the relative sparseness of its population, but also to the acts of a government which has deliberately tried to isolate people from what is happening abroad, and has done its best to prevent the emergence of any kind of artistic or intellectual creativity among the blacks.

So when you have swum in your swimming pool, and eaten the meal prepared for you and washed up by your servants, and spent five minutes over the newspaper or some rubbishy television program—what else can you do? Make your own flesh creep.

In fairness, I should add that more intellectual and professional whites are in fact leaving the country than ever before. Even the government press has acknowledged the seriousness of this loss of highly skilled manpower. They go to the United States, to Australia, to Israel, to Great Britain. But the favorite destination of today's émigrés is Canada. (Hence the joke: How do South Africans pronounce Toronto? Answer: To-run-to.) A second, contradictory point is that I met several young white men and women of liberal or radical disposition who declared to me with a firmness I don't recall encountering among people of my generation that they would never leave, come what may.

As for the mood of the blacks: here I noticed a change even greater than that among the whites. I was last in South Africa just two years ago—i.e., six months before the riots in Soweto (Johannesburg) and the other black townships outside the major cities, which were suppressed with such ferocity (600 or more dead). On that previous visit, as on earlier occasions, I had been repeatedly touched and surprised by how much genuine warmth and curiosity and openness there still was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

across the color line. (I am wily and experienced enough, I do believe, to distinguish warmth from the obsequiousness of habit or fear, which one still encounters.) But that warmth is all gone, certainly gone from one's casual contacts, and even more strikingly from one's contacts with people to whom one has been formally introduced. Those blacks who aren't obsequious just don't want to know, as the saying goes. They don't see you. When they have to look at you, they do so with a wariness and sullenness that is quite new and unmistakable. I encountered it again and again; and people who live in the country confirmed the observation. For the very first time I felt in the atmosphere something resembling the hatred among many blacks that people outside the country imagine to have been there for decades.

It is difficult to guess what the mass of whites make of this, or whether they have even noticed it. They have certainly been buying guns on an unprecedented scale. With these guns they now shoot their mistresses, lovers, fathers, and business partners. The papers are full of such cases.

* * *

Some Prospects. Since the Soweto uprisings, the country has never wholly returned to the silence and calm of which the authorities used to be so proud. During the entire period of my visit, bus burnings and school burnings were going on in the black township outside Port Elizabeth. The secondary-school children of Soweto have simply refused to enroll for the new school year. There have been bomb blasts in Johannesburg and elsewhere. Some assassinations of police informers and collaborators have taken place. The guerrilla war on the Angolan border exacts a small but steady toll of casualties.

But does any of this, or all of this, or even more of it, amount to a revolution, or indicate a revolution to be imminent? Surely not. The police and army can contain the mobs easily enough (even without massacring them), especially since one consequence of the apartheid policy has been the isolation of the black residential areas miles away from the city centers. The attempts to launch a campaign of urban terror made so far have been rather ineffective, even compared, say, with the IRA's assaults on London of a couple of years ago, let alone those which have been inflicted on Belfast. The blacks are divided tribally and linguistically, ill-educated, lacking experience in large-scale organization, and terrorized by the criminal elements in their midst. The political police (the Special Branch and the Bureau of State Security) are efficient and determined; and it has been clear since the death of some twenty-odd prisoners under interrogation, within the last year or so, that anything they do will be condoned by the authorities. And the bald, high plateau which occupies most of the interior is distinctly unpromising terrain for guerrilla warfare—whatever conditions may be like on the Angolan border, hundreds of miles from South African territory proper.

So why the anxieties spoken of above? Why the great increase in the size of the country's army? Why the concomitant expenditures on submarines, strike aircraft, missiles, and the rest? There are many reasons, and they are quite good ones: almost as good as those I have given to suggest that the government can hold its position indefinitely. The new mood of the blacks, especially the young ones, is a fact as well as a mood. It acquires a much greater degree of significance than it might otherwise have because of what is happening beyond the country's borders. Rhodesia and Namibia will soon "go black," one way or another, probably within the coming year. The UN is hostile and the possibility of sanctions—of an oil embargo in particular—is taken very seriously. The Western powers, who have invested heavily in South Africa, and to whom South Africa would naturally turn for protection, have shown no inclination to come to its aid. Above all, the Russians—through their Cuban proxies in Angola, and in their own right elsewhere—have entered Southern Africa, and no one knows how important this move is to them, or how much they are prepared to risk on it. But everyone in South Africa does know that most of the blacks there would welcome the Russians, however misguidedly in the longer term, as liberators, and would do everything they could to help them.

My own opinion, for what it's worth, is that a direct military assault on South Africa by Communist forces, or Communist-supported forces, is extremely unlikely. Distance, a paucity of communications, and some very uninviting deserts are in themselves deterrents, not to speak of the South African army or of the alarm that such a move would arouse in Europe and the United States. It seems more likely that the Russians at the moment want no more than to have sympathetic regimes installed in Namibia and Rhodesia—and then to see what might become possible later. Hence the support they are giving to SWAPO and to the Rhodesian Patriotic Front. However, I have heard from what is called a "reliable source" that the South African military planners are "obsessed" with the dangers from the north. Perhaps they have such an obsession because that is in the nature of military planners. Or perhaps it is because they are conscious of the resentment that is banked up behind them.

* * *

Two Archeological Expeditions. The Sterkfontein caves, near Krugersdorp, are almost as famous in anthropological circles as the Olduvai Gorge in Kenya. "The region," the *Encyclopaedia*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Britannica tells us, "is one of dry, grassy hills, little changed from their condition one million years ago." It was there that the skulls of Australopithecus ("gracile and manlike . . . found only in Africa") as well as of the more widely distributed Paranthropus were discovered by scientists from Witwatersrand University. Unfortunately, on the afternoon we went there, only one group of caves was open for our inspection: steep, cool shafts which smelled of water and were utterly black within, except for one that glowed with a distant light. A proper cave for cavemen to live in. To get there we had traveled along one of the main routes parallel to the gold-bearing Reef: thirty miles of small stores, big discount houses, bicycle shops, mine dumps, mine headframes, bluegum plantations, public parks, "The Mona Lisa Fish and Chips," garages, new housing tracts, and so forth. Australopithecus would have been impressed, I'm sure.

The other expedition was to an abandoned mine on the outskirts of Johannesburg. I was taken there by a girl who wanted to rent one of the cottages of corrugated iron (walls, roof, the lot) erected by the mining company for its white employees ninety years ago. Such cottages have now acquired period charm, it seems. For me, who grew up in Kimberley, another mining town, the sight of those cottages, and of everything around them, was like suddenly being immersed head first in my earliest memories; it was a return to my deepest notions of what the world is really supposed to look like. There should be huge mounds of sterile soil extracted from the earth, at the end of every vista; narrow-gauge rails running to no destination through groves of bluegums; pieces of heavy sheet metal put down as temporary bridges across culverts, and left there forever; a pipe of immense bore snaking for miles across the countryside, only to end gaping stupidly at the air, with an ignominious trickle of water hanging from its lower lip; random bits of masonry sticking out of the ground, some of them of an elaborate, quasi-Roman kind, with arches and buttresses; corrugated iron sheds rusting away quietly, each sheet a different color from its neighbor, as if on a patchwork bedspread.

Such sights, as I say, had once been familiar enough. But never before had I been free to wander about their source, at the mine-head, as I pleased. Now I could do so. Everything was still there: the Eiffel Tower-like headframe, from which hung the giant skip cars that had once brought up the ore; the wheels and motors which had wound them up; the shaft itself, covered with a concrete deck on which, as on a tombstone, were incised the words, No. 7 Vertical Shaft; the pump-house, with its great valves. There were buildings of brick, of wood, and of iron, all connected with one another by ladders and walkways, like the decks of a ship; on every wall there were warnings or instructions: In Case of Fire Underground Report Immediately to Nearest Surface Banksman. Lowering of Fuse: 9:30 A.M.

Ten years ago, I spent a morning down a Zambian copper mine. It had taken my back and thigh muscles a week to recover from the experience; longer still for my memory to get over the shock of the depth, the heat, the darkness, the claustrophobia, the unbelievable noise of giant drills cutting into the rock face at the end of stony black slits or pouches you had to crawl to get into. At a mile and more beneath the ground we were now standing on, such activity had gone on day after day, for almost a century. Without it, and without the same activity in scores of similar places, there would be no Johannesburg, no Soweto, no factories, no highways, no chain of Reef towns running east and west for fifty miles. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say there would be no country remotely resembling, socially and politically, the one that exists today.

Now birds sang nonstop from trees. Tall spears of grass grew over roadways. We had the place to ourselves. Until, that is, we turned and found ourselves surrounded by policemen, who had emerged from nowhere. Two were in ordinary uniform, one in camouflage. Later I saw that they had parked their vehicle a long way off, and expertly crept up on foot upon us. They were polite but very firm. We were told to clear off at once. We obeyed.

* * *

DINNER PARTY. The meal was delicious. The wine had a characteristic Cape mildness. Knives and forks winked in the candlelight. Our hollow-cheeked, vivacious hostess served up our portions with the help of a silent, swaying, uniformed maid. During dinner we talked of books, and of the career someone was making for himself in New Haven, Connecticut. Everything was *comme il faut*, absolutely. After dinner we retired to the sitting room for coffee, brandy, chocolates. Then, from the front door, came knocks, rings, and loud African voices, one male and one female, raised in dispute. Our host and hostess departed to investigate. The male voice rose louder than before. "I see dis gel in de room. Who she? What she?" To this, the female voice replied with a fierce storm of Zulu. Then, both at once. Our host and hostess's voices joined in, pacifyingly. The noise was suddenly cut off by slamming doors. Our hostess returned, distraught. "The horror of it! The humiliation! Everything in this country turns into a torment!"

The story, it appeared, was that her maid had a friend illegally staying in her room, and the night watchman of the apartment building had found this out. (The servants lived in little rooms on the top of the building.) Now he was demanding that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the stranger be kicked out at once, or he would inform the police. The maid, in turn, was accusing him of being so officious only because he had twice tried unsuccessfully to rape her. Both maid and watchman were drunk, according to our hosts.

Thereafter the conversation became exclusively political. Or sociological. Goodbye literature. Goodbye the West End theater. Even gossip, goodbye.

* * *

THE GRAND THEORY OF APARTHEID ACCORDING TO ITS PROPONENTS (CURRENT VERSION). For historical reasons it has clearly become impossible to regard the black man, as he was once universally seen to be, as the white man's ward and inferior. The blacks in South Africa are now as fully entitled to govern themselves as any other group in the continent. But so are the whites! The evidence of all history shows that attempts at power-sharing between groups so dissimilar, culturally and racially, as the blacks and whites in South Africa are bound to fail. Therefore, the country must be divided or unscrambled, politically and territorially. A number of black "Bantustans" or "homelands" must be established, on ethnic or linguistic lines, and given their complete independence.

This great work of reconstruction has already begun, with the grant of independence to the Republic of the Transkei in 1976, and to the Republic of BophutoTswana in December 1977. So far, South Africa is the only country in the world that has recognized the independence of these two republics; everyone else has regarded them as being quite without political substance. But one day they will become universally accepted. Eventually, *all* the blacks in Southern Africa will be citizens of one or another of such republics. Those who continue to work in what remains of "white" South Africa will have the same status as do *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers") in Western Europe, and will have no more claim on political rights in South Africa than a Turk, say, who works in Amsterdam has in Holland. The efforts that have already been made in "white" South Africa to desegregate facilities that have long been segregated, like five-star hotels, park benches, railway stations, and so forth, are aspects of the process of the normalization of relations among all the separate national communities which are now coming into existence.

Admittedly, there are difficulties in bringing this policy to fruition. It does perhaps seem unfair that even after the great plan has been fully put into effect, four million whites will be left with 87 per cent of the country's present area, including its agriculturally richest land and almost all its mineral wealth, while eighteen million blacks will be left with the rest. But that's how history has divided the place up. It also may seem unfair that because of the pattern of white landowning, only one or two of the new black republics will possess or consist of a consolidated piece of land of any size. BophutoTswana, for example, is made up of no less than six small islands of territory, scattered in random fashion across many hundreds of miles of the provinces of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Indeed, if the Republic of BophutoTswana were to try to exercise control over entrance to and egress from its sovereign territory, a large part of its population would have to be engaged in customs and border control.

These problems are relatively minor, however, compared with the fact that millions of the blacks who live and work in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and the rest have been born there, have never seen their "homelands," and have no intention of ever going to live in them, if they can possibly help it. Moreover, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban would simply cease to exist, economically, without their labor. (One can imagine Amsterdam without its Turks, not Johannesburg without its blacks.) Also to be considered is the fact that though five-star hotels may have been desegregated, the government has not the slightest intention of doing away with the Group Areas Act, say, which determines exactly where these *Gastarbeiter* must live; there is the fact that the blacks are wholly unwilling to accept the "passports" issued by the new republics as a sign of their new citizenship, and that severe sanctions have to be used to compel them to do so; there is the problem of what to do with the two million Cape Coloreds and the million Indians, for whom even more elaborate constitutional provisions are now being devised.

But what can you do? The world is an imperfect place. The white man in South Africa is not a "colonial" who can go elsewhere. (The Dutch-speaking ancestors of the Afrikaners arrived in the Cape three hundred years ago.) The whites are entitled to make sure of their survival. They have a right to exercise sole control over their own destiny. Give them time. Have faith in their good intentions. Look at what is happening in the rest of Africa.

* * *

MMBATHO, CAPITAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOPHUTOTSWANA. It is quite simple to get to Mmbatho from Johannesburg. You drive about two hundred miles straight westward, until you reach Mafeking. During the Anglo-Boer war, Mafeking was besieged by the Boers; on the night the siege was lifted, London enjoyed one of the wildest nights of revelry in its history. It seems hard to imagine why, when you see the place: it is dry, hot, dusty, isolated, quite without charm, even by the standards of the average South

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

African *dorp*. Anyway, once in Mafeking, you ask the nearest African on a street corner how to get to the new capital city. He answers: "Go to the next robot (i.e., traffic light), and turn right. Then turn left at the Total Garage."

Following his instructions, you soon leave Mafeking behind and travel for about a mile and a half across the bare, blistered Northern Cape veld, which stretches absolutely flat and uncultivated to the horizon, in a great arc around you. There are some thornbushes on its surface, some ant hills, a little dry grass. The sun bakes down, as it does the whole summer through. On the right, in the distance, you can see a few huts: the usual mud-walled affairs with the usual strips of corrugated iron on top, weighed down by boulders. On the left, rising improbably out of the wilderness, is a structure composed wholly of scaffolding, in the shape of a stadium. Then you come to a crossroads. On one side of it is a Shell gas station. On the other, the Mmbatho Sun Hotel. Nothing else. And when I say nothing else, I am not using a figure of speech. I mean, nothing else.

Inevitably, you park your car in the hotel parking lot. A garden is being laid out: so far it consists of bare earth, several prickly pears, a few aloes, and many empty beer cans. The hotel itself is a white stucco creation, with black tiles above: Mexico-Tswanan in style. A plaque under the portico informs you that it was opened 9.12.1977 by Lucas M. Mangope, *Moporositente* (President) *wa Repuboleki BaphutoTswana Ka.* Inside the hotel, the sun is banished; the blessing of air conditioning receives you. Behind the reception desk stand any number of excited Tswana girls, dressed up in smart yellow uniforms. To the right is a bar and a shop; directly in front of you, a small, thickly carpeted, brightly lit depression, containing row upon row of one-armed bandits. It is crammed with white South Africans, in sports shirts and sleeveless blouses, excitedly pulling the levers.

They are quite as thrilled with themselves as the black girls behind the counter. Gambling is forbidden within the Republic of South Africa; but now they are "abroad." What with the piped music, the bells ringing every time a handle is pulled down, and the occasional clatter of coins being disgorged, the noise is unendurable. On the far side of this hole, there is an airless gaming room, complete with traditional green, baize-covered tables and heavily shaded lights. Some blackjack and roulette is going on listlessly: it is now 2 P.M., and even the most newly-arrived Johannesburger, agog to play, is feeling the effect of the food and drink he had for lunch.

This place, flung down in the middle of nowhere, is one of the most bizarre I have ever seen in my life. The capital of the Republic of Bophuto-Tswana! When one thinks of Soweto and its million or more inhabitants, living in those endless lines of identical little brick and asbestos houses that march for mile upon mile across the veld to the south of Johannesburg, the closest analogy one can make is this: it is as if a quarter or a third of the blacks of New York have been told that a single hotel in Las Vegas is henceforth to be their capital city, the focus of their patriotism, and the place in which all their civic and political ambitions are to be realized.

What makes it even more bizarre is that all the people taking advantage of these wonderful facilities are white: with only one exception. A large black man is feeding money into one of the machines, watched by a small, admiring claque of locals, who are too poor to gamble themselves, and too timid to stand and gape at the whites. So they cluster around him, while he performs—and loses.

The final bizarre touch, for me at any rate, is that in the midst of this activity I am introduced to an elderly woman by the name of Shirley Frisch (let's say), who is wearing a sun-suit that displays much of her freckled bosom and all of her freckled arms. "My late husband Harry often talked of you," she tells me; shouts at me, rather, above the chiming bells and machine-gun disgorgements of coins. Harry Frisch? From nowhere I remember a small, round boy in gray shorts, a couple of classes below me at school; for some reason I recall particularly the silver buckle of the belt that held up those shorts. Now he has been transmogrified into the late husband of this lady. What can I say? "I'm very sorry." It hardly seems adequate.

* * *

HAVING FUN AT THE MMBATHO SUN. That is the legend printed on the T-shirts you can buy in the hotel shop; above the lettering is a picture of some men and women in old-fashioned evening dress standing at a roulette table. You can also have a drink at the bar, which is decorated (rather strangely, considering the fate of so many Tswana migrant laborers in Johannesburg) with mining helmets, picks, and safety lamps. You can swim in the swimming pool, in the middle of a sun-dazzled courtyard, which has a convenience quite new to me: all around the pool, embedded in the ground like tombstones in a cemetery, are white, upright, plastic headrests for the sunbathers, with a foam-rubber mattress stretched out in front of each. (Perhaps this is standard equipment in the Bahamas nowadays; I can't tell.) You can "Dine With the Stars" ("Ben E. King, Direct from the U.S.A.!") for an extra 15 rand. You can speak to "Brian" about tennis and swimming lessons.

But eventually the pleasures of the hotel pall, and you plunge back into the heat and barrenness outside. This time you return to Mafeking not by the direct route you took before, but by the other of the two roads outside. This one is called the Lucas Mangope highway. A great bronze plaque

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the roadside tells you so. Nothing is built up alongside it. It too runs away into the emptiness. Crows sit on top of telegraph poles. A barefoot girl drags away a dried thornbush for firewood. Some donkeys stand in the middle of the highway, declining to move. Eventually you reach the railway line: it runs straight north to Botswana, Rhodesia, Zambia. On the other side of the line, the road curves toward that skeletal grandstand, where the independence celebrations took place a few weeks before. Now it is deserted. Being made of builders' scaffolding, it could be dismantled in a night. (Probably it will be, soon; and reassembled elsewhere, for the celebration of the independence of the next Bantustan.)

Beyond it, some construction work is going on behind a tall security fence of mesh and barbed wire. They are building elaborate houses there for President Mangope and his entourage: cabinet ministers and the white "advisers" sent out by the South African government. (All of them paid for by South Africa.) They are also building a parliament for President Mangope: a red and yellow structure of glass and steel girders which clearly owes something in its design, so help me, to the Pompidou Arts Center in Paris. We are allowed to glimpse it only from afar, for the one gate we can find in the outer fence is securely locked, and there is no one in sight.

Beyond all this, in turn, is the Mafeking "location" or black township: Mafeking's own little Soweto. It is the usual mess of homemade mud huts, or tiny municipal boxes of brick or concrete; unpaved roads; attempts at gardens in the dust; junked cars; naked black infants; older children fetching water in paraffin tins; tumbledown trading stores; crowds of people walking to or from the town itself. It goes on and on, until you arrive at Mafeking railway station. At that point, as you cross the railway bridge, you have left the Republic of BophutoTswana and reentered the Republic of South Africa. There is no frontier or border post to tell you this. (Nor was there one to mark the frontier on the other road.) When you look behind, you can see the flag of the new republic hanging down limply above a cluster of hospital buildings. It is blue, with an orange stripe, and a cheetah's head in one corner.

Whether any system can ever be devised to enable all of South Africa's peoples to live together in a reasonable degree of dignity and amity is doubtful indeed; it is even more doubtful that such a system would ever be put into effect. But to imagine a place like this to be the answer! It is just a joke in rather bad taste. Or, as a newly enfranchised citizen of the republic—with a broom in his hand and a pair of overalls on his back—had said to me in his halting English, before my visit: "It is just to crook the people."

* * *

THE LAND OF GOSHEN. One curious fact about the part of the country around Mafeking is that it actually has a history of tin-pot republics having been declared there. BophutoTswana is not the first such entity it has seen. A hundred years ago, two tiny, independent Boer republics were proclaimed in the area. One was called Stellaland (after its capital, Stella, a *dorp* even smaller than Mafeking, and about fifty miles south of it); the other, Goshen, after the place in the wilderness where the Children of Israel had once sojourned. Neither republic lasted long; neither was ever recognized by anyone else—not even by the founders' fellow Boers.

* * *

LICHTENBURG AND VRYBURG. Lichtenburg, which I passed through on the way to Mmbatho, was wholly new to me; Vryburg I had visited during my last year at school, with a rugby team that had played a game there. I mention these two undistinguished places because in their different ways they both represent what the Afrikaners still like to think of as *their* heartland, even though most Afrikaners now live in the big cities. Lichtenburg is set in the prosperous corn belt; Vryburg in harsher, dryer, cattle-ranching country. Both have branches of the Standard Bank, the OK Bazaars, the local agricultural cooperative, and garages selling Volkswagens and Toyotas; both have brand new Dutch Reformed churches, with very thin steeples; in both there are expensive, new municipal buildings, and rather parched but beautifully maintained public gardens, with monuments scattered about in them. They also have several Portuguese-owned fish-and-chips shops, which sell fruit, canned goods, cigarettes, candies, and copies of *Popular Mechanics* and *True Confessions*. The houses are almost all low, whitewashed cottages with iron roofs; each invariably stands in the middle of a wire-fenced garden, where a few fruit trees (peaches, figs) and flowering shrubs do their best.

At all times, inside these *dorps,* one is conscious of the spaces around them, and of the even bigger spaces above—at night, too, when great bands of stars hang directly overhead, African fashion. Both are quiet, orderly, neat in appearance, allowing for some straggle. By day they are fairly busy, mostly because of the blacks who come in from the surrounding district to get their provisions. By night, the only blacks you see are the waiters who stand idly on the stoops of the small, two-storied hotels, with trays in their hands.

What is more poignant about such places—their forlornness, or their attempt at spruceness? The social, cultural, and aesthetic thinness that is somehow revealed in every line; or the pertinacity with which those lines have been drawn?

In Lichtenburg there were no less than three

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

monuments to the Boers who had fought in the Anglo-Boer war. One of them was to General de la Rey, a great hero and campaigner, shown more than life-size on his horse, with a fierce whip in his hand. (Not a riding crop, a whip.) There was also a monument to the Afrikaans language: the only monument I have ever come across erected to their language by the people who speak it. It is in the shape of a globe, made of silver mosaic tiles: out of the top of the globe appears a pair of hands clutching a book in prayer-like manner. Around the globe is an inscription in metal letters, which explains the monument's shape and color: *'n Pêrel van Groot Waarde—AFRIKAANS* (A Pearl of Great Worth—AFRIKAANS). At some distance from these there is another monument, erected not by grateful townsfolk, but by the family of those it commemorates. It is in memory of David and Rosa Rothschild: "Pioneers of Lichtenburg."

The monuments I remember best from Vryburg are outside the town. As you approach it from the north, you pass a big roadside sign with an arrow pointing to the right: *Bantoe Woongebied* (Black Living Area). Then another sign with an arrow to the left: Colored Living Area. Then a third notice: Asiatic Living Area. Then, and only then, does a fourth sign appear. It says: Welcome To Vryburg.

* * *

THE JEWS. One distinctive feature of the history of the South African Jewish community is that the immigrants who arrived at the turn of the century scattered across the length and breadth of country. Not the tiniest place but had at least one and often several Jewish shopkeepers and traders. Hence David and Rosa Rothschild, pioneers of Lichtenburg. Hence "The Simon Lillienthal Guildhall" in Vryburg.

Those days are now gone. The community has concentrated itself in the cities—Johannesburg, from its very foundation, having always been the main center of attraction. Though its numbers are tiny by American standards (about 130,000 people) and are not growing, the community is wealthy, well-organized, and disproportionately prominent in the commercial, professional, and intellectual life of the country. (Just the other day, the London *Times*, in an article about white emigration from South Africa, spoke of Jews "dominating" its medical profession—which is an exaggeration, but not a great exaggeration.)

Relations between the Jews and the Nationalist government have always been correct, if more than a little strained on occasion. Quite apart from any other grounds for mutual misgiving, the Jews have not forgotten the support the Nationalists got from, and gave to, Nazi Germany forty years ago; the Afrikaners have not forgiven the Jews for their wealth, their proneness to liberal attitudes toward the blacks, and the disproportionate number of them to be found in the banned radical and underground organizations. These strains are both complicated and relieved by the ups and downs of the relations between South Africa and the state of Israel—these have had an "up" phase recently—as well as by the admiration the Afrikaners feel for the Israelis. Precisely as their pious, trekking, Boer forebears saw themselves as the wandering Israelites in search of the Promised Land, so the Afrikaners today like to see themselves as the Israelis of Africa: alone in a hostile continent, and determined to maintain themselves there against all odds. This sense of admiration or identification is so strong that one sometimes gets the impression that the Afrikaners don't really mind if Jewish doctors and engineers who despair of South Africa's future pack up and leave for Israel. It's the ones who head for New Haven, Connecticut, who really get their goat.

Just how correct the government tries to be in its dealings with the Jews is evidenced by a curious document which I have in front of me. Headed, "Kosher Facilities in the South African Defense Forces," it advises Jewish boys drafted into the army that they can apply to be posted to certain units in which kosher kitchens have been made available. Obviously this facility is promised to them only in their training camps, not on the Angolan border.

* * *

REALPOLITIK, REALISM, AND MORALS. While Angola and Mozambique were still within the Portuguese empire, South Africa clearly followed a "forward" policy toward its neighbors: it hoped to maintain a *cordon sanitaire* of white-ruled states around it. To this end, it had troops (militarized police units) taking part in the slaughterous guerrilla war in Rhodesia. Once the Portuguese empire collapsed, after the coup in metropolitan Portugal, this policy seems to have been abandoned. South Africa then apparently concluded that its interests lay in the establishment of moderate, friendly, black states on its borders, preferably in cooperation with whatever allies it could find elsewhere in Africa, and with the Western powers. Troops were withdrawn from Rhodesia, and Ian Smith's white government there was urged to accept the prospect of majority (black) rule. Plans to set up an apartheid-type state in Namibia, complete with self-governing, ethnic "homelands," and other such familiar ingenuities, were abandoned. Even the unhappy venture in Angola, when South African troops were betrayed (as the white South Africans see it) by the United States, after they had gone in to defeat the Cuban-backed MPLA, was a part of this policy: the South Africans were fighting to put into power a black, anti-Communist government

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which would be well-disposed to them. In fighting off SWAPO, they are now attempting to do the same thing in Namibia; and they are hoping that Ian Smith will find black successors to himself who will keep the Russian-supported Patriotic Front out of power in Rhodesia.

All this, the white South Africans are convinced, is to the advantage both of South Africa and of the Western powers. So why are these powers not actively assisting South Africa? Why are Britain and the United States so anxious to placate SWAPO, and to woo the Rhodesian Patriotic Front? Rhodesia is a rich prize; Namibia an even richer one, potentially at least; of South Africa itself one can say not only that it supplies the world with most of its gold, platinum, and diamonds, and has almost immeasurable resources of uranium, manganese, chrome, iron, and coal, but also that there is hardly a major European or American manufacturing corporation which does not have a plant in the republic. So why is South Africa execrated, shunned, denied the arms it needs, left to shoulder alone the burden of combating Communism in the southern half of the continent?

Because of apartheid? Because the blacks of Soweto, many of whom have only just emerged from a semi-tribal state, are denied social and political privileges which the whites of Johannesburg enjoy? Are these adequate reasons, in a world torn by great-power rivalries, to deny friendship and assistance to the most powerful and highly developed state on the continent, with resources of trained manpower and technological skills that none of the others has even begun to approach; with a government that is only too eager to encourage and reward foreign investment; with a record of stability on the highest levels that few other African countries can emulate—no coups, no cabinet ministers found floating in rivers, no judges beaten to death with hammers?

The argument can be carried further; or put in other terms. Even if one agrees that the latest developments in the policy of apartheid are fraudulent, and that the "separate freedoms" granted to BophutoTswana and the rest are a hoax; even if one takes it for granted that the intention of the whites of South Africa is simply to hang on for dear life to everything they've got—wherein, in that respect, are they different from anybody else? What easily identifiable group would willingly yield its power and privileges to a majority which is alien in appearance, languages, and manners; which is far less educated than the minority; and which is manifestly less well-equipped to run the country? What minority in such circumstances would not fear for its very existence if power were transferred, rapidly *or* slowly, to the majority? (Especially when there is so long-standing a history of conflict between them?) And if the indefinite retention of power involves fraud, brutality, cynicism, discrimination, dictatorial methods, torture in prison, occasional bloodshed in the streets —well, does anyone imagine that the process of securing a transfer of power will not produce all these too, and worse? And who can seriously hope that those who eventually take over will be lovers of liberty and friends of the powerless? The world abounds with regimes as repressive or more repressive than that of South Africa; why should South Africa be singled out for universal condemnation?

All the questions just asked above are impossible to answer in a confidently reassuring manner. But the answer one must give to the last does affect one's response to the others. South Africa *is* singular in that its citizens' race and color—and these alone—determine by law what their civil and juridical rights will be, forever. For that very reason, arguments from *Realpolitik* do not necessarily work as much in South Africa's favor as some people inside and outside the country like to imagine. For even if we ignore what is happening elsewhere in Africa, the demographic facts within South Africa itself make it clear that the present disposition of power is inherently unstable, and going to become more so as the black population continues to grow in size relative to the whites. And why should outsiders choose to support a minority, however well entrenched it now may be, when the majority is becoming more and more convinced of the possibility or inevitability of radical change?

The irony of the argument is, in fact, that a minority in such a situation is worth backing only when it expresses or embodies moral and political values which other states feel they cannot, for their own sake, allow to go under. Now, however much one may wish to sympathize with the white South Africans in the dilemma which ultimately faces them, who would claim that they, or the policies they have followed for the last thirty years, embody and express such values?

* * *

LANGUAGES. The struggle of the Afrikaners to have Afrikaans recognized as a real language, and not regarded merely as a debased jargon of Dutch, was central to their rise as a nation. National sentiment cohered quite as much around their language as it did around the Dutch Reformed Church, or the memory of two 19th-century Boer republics in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, which were dismantled by the British after their victory in the Anglo-Boer war. When the Nationalists came into power in 1948, it must have seemed to them that the linguistic struggle, at least, had been truly won. By then they had already overtaken the English-speaking whites numerically; today they outnumber them by almost two to one.

Yet the extraordinary fact is that today English

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(of a kind) appears to be more widely spoken in South Africa than ever before. The reason for this is not just that most immigrants from Europe during the past quarter-century, and most of the Portuguese refugees from Angola and Mozambique during the last few years, have opted for English. What really counts is that the blacks have universally repudiated Afrikaans, which they regard quite simply as the language of their chief oppressors. The 1976 riots in Soweto, which changed everyone's mood and expectations so dramatically, broke out when the government attempted to make the use of Afrikaans compulsory in black schools. (The demand has since been dropped.) In places like Kimberley or Vryburg, where I would have assumed that any African would speak to any white man in Afrikaans, in the first instance, I was addressed in English. Several blacks, including one who was extremely circumspect in every other regard, spoke to me of Afrikaans with undisguised loathing. If they talk or read a white man's language, they will choose English every time it is possible for them to do so.

For liberal Afrikaners—and there are such people—and they have and need great courage, given the degree of isolation from which they suffer, within the isolation of Afrikanerdom generally—this is just another aspect of the tragedy they are living through. For other Afrikaners, it is a source of rage. However, in one minor respect all of them have become liberals linguistically; and that development, too, is a tribute to the power of English. When I lived in South Africa, the battle within Afrikaans against Anglicisms was unceasing. Now it has been abandoned. Thus one finds the Afrikaans press to be full of preposterous words—for which there are perfectly good equivalents of Dutch origin—like *kulminasie* (culmination) and *konflik* and *empaaier* (which I shall not translate).

I cannot speak about the health of various African tongues, for I know none of them. (The sound of murmuring or shouting but always uncomprehended voices from the kitchen or backyard or street was as much a part of my childhood as the presence of my parents or the look of the rooms we lived in.) Though it may seem fanciful to say so, my impression is that the possession of these languages, when they have been dispossessed of so much else, is a source of great strength to the blacks.

* * *

CROSSING THE KEI RIVER. If you jeer inwardly at the Republic of Bophuto-Tswana for being without border posts and frontier guards—indeed, owing to its extraordinary geography, for being without any prospect of ever enjoying these attributes of statehood—you will be duly chastised when you cross the Kei River to enter the Republic of the Transkei. That was my experience, anyway. It took forty-five minutes for my wife and me to get across this frontier—which is recognized by nobody in the world other than the two parties on either side of it.*

It was our United Kingdom passports which undid us. The whites and blacks ahead of us, bearers of South African or brand new Transkeian passports, were waved through with relatively little fuss. But when our documents were produced at the border posts—and a fine, dramatic border it is too, with the road winding down for miles through unpeopled hills before it arrives at the river—we gave everybody work to do. Work they enjoyed doing. The South Africans, one of whom had his wife and flaxen-haired toddler in the office with him, were very dapper and very polite, and gave us an elaborate form to fill out, asking when we had come to South Africa, why we had come to South Africa, where we were going now that we were leaving South Africa, and so forth. Then they permitted us to cross the narrow bridge. (A new bridge is under construction.) There the Transkeians were waiting for us. They were less dapper, less polite, and much, much less efficient.

First of all they gave my wife and me two long forms apiece to fill out. When we had done this, and handed them back across the counter, together with our passports, three policemen proceeded laboriously, with much mutual consultation in Xhosa and English, to fill out every other form they had on their desks. The smallest of the three was evidently their leader: at any rate, his word carried most weight in their consultations. He had a curious way of writing—vertically, as it were, away from himself. On one of the forms, I noticed, he had entered me as "Mr. Margaret Dunipace." When I objected, he pointed to "Dunipace" and asked, reasonably enough, "What's this?" I explained that it was my wife's middle name. Whereupon, after prolonged thought, he wrote "Jacobson" above it. More thought followed; then he added the words, "And other one." Finally, I paid 4 rand for our visas, all the forms and our passports were heavily stamped, and we were told we could now go through. Examining the papers on the way back to the car, I noticed that one of them, stamped and signed like all the rest, was headed "Notice of Prohibition." It announced solemnly and unequivocally: "Item One: As you are a prohibited person as defined in Section 40 (1) (c) of Act 59 of 1972, you are refused permission to enter or remain within the Republic of Transkei."

Which of the policemen was responsible for *that* one? All three of them watched us blandly and impassively, like men who had done everything that could be expected of them, as we drove through.

* * *

* Correction: it has been pointed out to me that the Republic of the Transkei is also recognized by the Republic of BophutoTswana.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE REPUBLIC OF THE TRANSKEI. To be fair, this homeland does not make anything like so farcical an impression, once you are inside it, as the Republic of BophutoTswana. It has the plausibility of occupying a large and beautiful territory—not large, perhaps, in relation to the rest of the Cape Province, of which it used to be part, let alone in relation to South Africa as a whole, but nevertheless unfragmented and recognizable. It is inhabited by people who speak a common tongue (Xhosa) and recognize a certain kinship with one another, despite tribal divisions among them. It has a capital by the name of Umtata, which is hardly larger than Lichtenburg, and is much poorer, but which is graced by a tiny parliament building with columns in front and a dome above, a Holiday Inn, and a new university, of which "Phase One" is being constructed. It has an unspoiled coast line of astonishing intricacy and splendor, and hence has a small tourist industry catering to white South African vacationers. It has the K. D. Matanzima airport, named inevitably enough after its prime minister. It also has the advantage of having done away with all apartheid regulations, which comes as a relief after a couple of weeks within the rest of South Africa.

But it is bone poor. So poor that most of its adult males have to spend their working lives in the cities and farms across the frontier, where, for all the dignity supposedly conferred on them by their new passports, they are treated like any other blacks. So poor that the government is almost as dependent on South African handouts as that of BophutoTswana. The wide, fenceless spaces of the country, profusely dotted about with traditional round huts of mud and thatch, give an impression of serenity and changelessness. In fact, the place is overpopulated, overgrazed, eroded, and disease-ridden.

The people we met were on the whole no friendlier in their demeanor than the blacks of South Africa. But some of them spoke frankly to us: from the young man who despised Matanzima and his government, and said of the "independence" of the country, "It is like cutting off a man's arm—and then telling the arm that it is independent!" to the waiter in a beat-up hotel in Umtata, who earnestly steered me away from the public bar with the words, "I never let you go in there—too cowboy in that place, too rough." The combination everywhere of modernity with what seems to be a still relatively rooted tribal life was fascinating. One saw hooded, white-daubed, white-blanketed youths with staves plodding by the roadside; they were undergoing the initiation rite of circumcision in "schools" in the bush. One met sophisticated girls who complained of the politics of the London *Daily Telegraph*, and fiercely defended the rites their male contemporaries had to go through. ("They are healed with Xhosa herbs. . . . Everyone will laugh at them if they have it done in a hospital.") The little clay models offered to passersby by half-naked children were not of animals or birds, as they used to be, but of "Marcades" trucks and buses. (The word spelled thus, incised into the clay.) An advertisement on the front page of the Transkei *Business Directory* read, simply enough: "Laura's Fashion Boutique: Tribal Wear and Unisex."

One carries away from the place an impression of incongruities of a more sinister kind, too. A lot of corruption is going on there: indeed, there is a sense in which corruption is not incidental to it, but can be thought of as the very purpose for which the Transkei Republic has been brought into existence. By this I don't mean merely that despite the general level of poverty, there seemed to be a fair number of men who were sufficiently prosperous to dine with their exquisitely dressed girls in the Holiday Inn—leaving their black "Marcades" parked in front of the hotel entrance, right on the No Parking signs painted on the pavement. Nor do I mean only that Prime Minister Kaiser D. Matanzima does not permit much opposition to be expressed publicly in his splendid little parliament building, or outside it, and has been governing the country ever since independence under a wide-ranging State of Emergency—a proclamation which gives him and his brother George, who is minister of justice, the powers they need to keep things as they wish them to be.* (In this task they are known, incidentally, to receive the professional help of the South African Special Branch.)

No, what really distinguishes the Transkei Republic from any other corrupt African regime is this: the beneficiaries of the system are in effect being used by the South Africans to make more palatable and acceptable *to the white South Africans themselves*—and perhaps to a credulous world—everything that goes on in South Africa, including the employment under apartheid conditions of hundreds of thousands of people who are supposedly Transkei citizens. In the Transkei, a possibility I had glimpsed only from a great distance in BophutoTswana became clearer to me: the possibility that the South African government is waking up to the fact that there is more than one way of skinning a cat. For the first time it seemed to have dawned on them that buying planes, tanks, armored cars, etc. is just one method of spending money on self-defense. You can also buy people. Black people. They come relatively cheap: an honorific title, a Mercedes car, access to a Holiday Inn, a palatial house on a hilltop.

* In his autobiography, *Independence My Way*, which is not so much an autobiography as a random collection of apologetics, speeches, old press clippings, and so forth, Prime Minister Matanzima tells us that he and his brother, having been born during World War I, were named by their ambitious father after the heads of the warring British and German empires.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Cabinet ministers' houses were going up in expensive rows on both sides of Umtata. As in BophutoTswana: first things first.) Once there, you can rely on them to try to remain there. And you and they can thereafter enjoy with a clear conscience your "separate freedoms."

* * *

PORT ST. JOHNS. Still, in many respects I think I would rather be a black man in the Transkei—provided I could make a living there—than elsewhere in South Africa. Take the beach at Port St. Johns. It is one of the loveliest I have ever seen: secluded between two wild, green hillsides, and some distance from a broad estuary. On the day we were there, the beach was packed with people, almost all of them black. They sat under parasols, and played games with balls, and built sandcastles, as people do on any beach. There were girls dressed in snappy bikinis, and old ladies who mirthfully prostrated themselves on the water's edge in bras and nylon bloomers. There were girls who walked about topless because they were so sophisticated; and others who did the same thing because they were so primitive. (The difference between the two kinds of girls was quite evident, funnily enough.) When we got back to our hotel after swimming, I found a postcard on a rack in the foyer which showed the same beach just a few years before. It was crowded then, too. But everyone on it, without exception, was white. In those days, as it still is elsewhere in South Africa, it would have been a criminal offense for any of the blacks we had seen to have appeared on the beach. (A number of cases of police harassment of Colored families on beaches in the Cape Peninsula were actually reported in the press while I was there.)

The hotel itself remained a wholly white enclave. It was the only place in the Transkei where I heard the word "baas" being used by the black staff. The guests were conventional, respectable English-speaking South Africans, with peeling noses, and with fishing rods strapped to the roofs of their cars. But there were some oddities among them: a party of four homosexual Afrikaner men, flamboyantly dressed and beautifully barbered, who went in for much play with the 20's-style cigarette holders with which they had equipped themselves; and an unappealing family from England (also oddly 1920-ish, somehow), consisting of old-soldier father, pretty son, ugly daughter, and mother who dominated the others completely. She had the knack of speaking from the back of her throat, barely moving her lips, while emitting a louder sound than anyone else in the dining room. Outside, in its beautiful setting, Port St. Johns seemed to be slowly falling into a state of neglect and disrepair: its toy bank, toy town hall, and toy post office were all sadly in need of paint; there were broken windows in the hotel at the main intersection; black vacationers leaned over balconies upstairs and shouted at others who were sitting on the cracked pavement, or were busy getting drunk from their own half-bottles in a "tea garden and patio" nearby.

None of this would have been the case when Port St. Johns was still run by whites—neither the blacks taking advantage of its facilities, nor the air of disorder and slovenliness they had brought in with them. (The hotels and shops were all still white-owned, incidentally, like those in Umtata and elsewhere in the territory.) It puzzled me then, and puzzles me now, why the thousands of huts in their little clusters which we passed in the countryside should have looked so neat, inside and out; why the towns were all beginning to look so messy and rundown.

Then we drove the sixty miles back to Umtata: a spectacular drive, particularly near the coast, where the sides of the deep defiles were covered with trees and creepers that grew up or hung down from every fragment of soil. On the way, we picked up a bespectacled, track-suited hitchhiker, who turned out to be a clerk in the Transkei Development Corporation, and a fervent admirer of Kaiser Matanzima and "the modern situation"—which was his way of referring to the country's independence. Notwithstanding his track suit he said, "I am very proud of that attire" when we passed some women wearing traditional long dresses and two-horned turbans. When I asked him what he did in the Development Corporation, he answered laconically, as if it were the most obvious and self-explanatory thing in the world: "Registering people."

* * *

PRICKLY PEARS. No problems arose when we crossed the border of the Republic of Transkei back into the Republic of South Africa. However, an incident I observed at the frontier post—on the South African side, this time—has stuck in my mind as somehow symbolic of the painful solemnity and absurdity of the charade that is now being played out on both sides of the Kei River.

I have already mentioned that the lofty hills surrounding the gorge through which the river runs appeared to be absolutely empty. Driving back, I again saw no one on those dry, stony, scrub-covered slopes. But there must have been habitations out there. I know this because when I was returning to my car, after having been inspected and approved by the South African border officials, I saw a party of three people walking on foot across the bridge, from the Transkei: a woman and her two barefoot children. She was carrying on her head, in traditional fashion, a large tin bowl; the children, about ten and eight years old, had smaller bowls in their arms.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No one else was about. No cars were waiting at either end. They had the bridge to themselves. I watched them make their way slowly, in the great heat, across the river. Just before they stepped off the bridge, an aged African office boy of some kind, in a tattered jacket and black peaked cap (to indicate that he, too, had official status), was sent to meet them by one of the white border guards, who had flicked a finger in their direction. The messenger conversed with them for a few moments, then turned and led them to the waiting whites. When they were about ten yards away, he held up his hand like a traffic policeman holding up a great surge of traffic, and the woman and her two children halted behind him. Pause. Then another flick of the finger from the white official. Now they could come forward: they had been formally admitted onto South African soil. They approached the officials. The woman lifted the bowl from her head with both hands. She unfolded the cloth that covered it, and proffered its contents to them.

It contained cactus fruits. Prickly pears. So did the smaller, flatter plates carried by the children, who extended theirs too, with great timidity. None of them said a word. Nor did the black intermediary, in his important peaked cap. The white officials inspected this offering. In the distinctive voice in which Afrikaners speak to blacks —and there is such a voice; and whether its intention is kindly or angry, it is always rough—one of them said, "Oh, hell no, they're much too green!" Another took out a pocket knife, opened it carefully, and sliced open one of the prickly pears, revealing the pink flesh and pips within the tough, warty skin. "Look at that!" he complained. "A man can't eat that. . . . You bring them back when they're ripe." Then, apparently out of a feeling of compunction, he groped in his pocket and took out a copper coin, a one- or two-cent piece, and threw it in the bowl.

The woman picked up the coin, covered the prickly pears with the cloth, the children shifted their plates from one arm to the other, and the party turned silently and began the trek back.

To where? How far had they walked in the hope of making a sale? How long would it take before these international traders disappeared once again into the hillsides burning in the sunlight on the other side of the river?

Later we flew from East London back to Johannesburg. It was the evening before one of the army's semi-annual call-up days, and there were many draftees on the plane. Their families were excited and tearful, seeing them off; the young men, of whom there must have been about a dozen, merely looked depressed—even more depressed than those I had spoken to during that first meal after my arrival.

* * *

PROSPECTS (AGAIN) AND CONCLUSIONS. That the strains and stresses within the South African system are going to be felt more and more acutely by all who are directly involved, and that some difficult decisions are going to confront other states with interests in the area, can hardly be in doubt. This does not mean that decisive or irreversible developments are bound to take place in the near future. The running crisis which already exists will have its moments of drama and its spells of quiescence; none of the protagonists or elements that make it up is going to go away. My own guess is that whatever changes do take place, for good or ill, are more likely to be the result of a process of unceasing attrition—physical, political, economic, moral, psychological, even cultural—than of some single, overwhelming or cataclysmic event.

One thing that is clearer to me than before my visit is that the whites in South Africa are almost as conscious as the blacks of the possibility of radical change. The prospect fills them with fear (and how can they be blamed for it?); but it also makes them more vulnerable than before to suasion from outside. For all the defiant utterances of cabinet ministers and others about the resistance they will offer to "outside interference," I was surprised at the sensitivity of both the media and the politicians to moral and other forms of pressure from abroad—and from the West in particular. Perhaps they respond in this way to pressures from the United States and Europe because they know that outside interference from other, even less welcome, sources is not going to diminish in the years ahead.

The Afrikaners' isolation weighs on them heavily. President Carter and other Western leaders are abused or accused almost daily in the Afrikaans press: it is said that they don't know where their true interests lie, they are Communist stooges, "sickly liberalists," hypocrites. But such bluster does not really cheer up the people responsible for it. Where can they turn to, for capital, technology, military help, and—quite as important—for *respect*, if not to these hypocrites and stooges? When the Canadian government, for example, made the purely symbolic gesture during my visit of withdrawing its trade consuls, the event aroused great concern. One can only guess what effect real, material sanctions—an oil embargo, to give again the favorite example—would have on the economy. There can be no doubt, however, of the profound effect such sanctions would have on the morale of both blacks and whites.

Whether the United States and other Western countries will ever combine with the Byelorussian Republic and Uganda—among others—to impose sanctions, and in what circumstances they may feel impelled to do so, are topics it seems pointless to speculate about. (Though a great deal of speculation about it, and some far-reaching preparations

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for it, have already taken place in South Africa.) But it is worth emphasizing in this context that the process of attrition referred to above is not merely that of the different racial groups rubbing abrasively against one another, with or without the support of contending forces abroad. Another form of attrition exerted indiscriminately on all South Africans is that of the industrial and commercial system they have brought into being, and from which none of them can, or now wish to, extricate themselves. *That* is what seems to have begun slowly rubbing away from the Afrikaner something of his conviction that the whiteness of his skin must unquestioningly be put above all other values; that is what makes the black hesitate to risk whatever possessions he has managed to get together—a little house in Soweto, a smart suit, perhaps a third-hand or fourth-hand Dodge or Toyota. In the confusion of races and languages and styles which make up the society, all of them having the air of having been sundered from themselves, let alone from one another, material possessions remain the only common culture they seem to have. Only in the pursuit of possessions do they begin to seem ready to acknowledge their fundamental likeness to one another; only there do they reveal a measure of shared understanding.

The possibility of compromise, so far as it exists at all, might thus in some ways spring from that which would seem to exclude compromise: a greed for the goods which the land has begun to make available so profusely. This paradox should not surprise us too greatly. A faint possibility of compromise may also be said to spring from the fate or fact of history which makes the Afrikaners apparently so unyielding: the fact that they have nowhere else to go.

* * *

AFRIKANERSTAN. If the Afrikaners put their survival as a people above all other considerations, as they so vociferously claim to do, it is surprising that one does not hear voices among them seriously suggesting that instead of creating "Bantustans" or "homelands" for the blacks, they should instead be trying to create an "Afrikanerstan" for themselves. That is, an area of South Africa in which they will really be a majority; in which they will do all their own work, living there like every other nation that does not have helots of a different race perpetually at its command.

But no one, so far as I know, proposes such a thing. The people who attack Prime Minister Vorster from the Right—and he is attacked from that direction, however surprising this may seem to outsiders—do not upbraid him for failing to carve out of South Africa's wide spaces a distinctive national territory for the Afrikaners. They complain that he lets black men sit on park benches, or play on football teams with white players. In other words, even these guardians of Afrikaner purity want the lot: all the wealth which is produced by black labor, and all the privacies and exclusions and superiorities they have always been accustomed to. Then they solemnly join in with Vorster in assuring you that history shows all attempts at power-sharing between different communities to have ended in failure.

The Afrikaners could not create for themselves a territorial entity of the kind I have just suggested without a great deal of self-sacrifice, and without inflicting sacrifices on others. But if they were to do it, they would then really resemble the Israelis: certainly all those Israelis who have no wish to incorporate into their country a million unwilling Arabs. Would they then be allowed to live in peace? Would the qualities of tenacity and cohesiveness which they undoubtedly have as a people then really come into flower? Might they not find that, so far from having lost privileges in ceasing to oppress and exploit millions of others, they have actually thrown off a great burden?

But now I have begun writing science ficton, not reportage.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Rediscovery of the Family

Nathan Glazer

A FUNNY thing happened on the way to developing a radical critique of the American family: it has turned out that the old model was not so bad after all. One of our best-known radical critics and historians, for example, has come out with a book not only attacking just about every reform ever proposed or instituted for the family, but also defending the patriarchal and authoritarian family in terms that might embarrass a conference of Catholic bishops.* A second scholar recently set out to examine possible alternatives to the family arrangement—on the clear assumption that they had something good to offer—only to end up deciding that the traditional family, with certain modifications, is here to stay, and a good thing too.† Add to these straws in the wind the fact that the Democratic presidential candidate ran on a strong pro-family position, that his administration is spending a great deal of time trying to design policies for strengthening the family, and that the most Democratic and presumably liberal Congress in many years has just passed a very restrictive bill limiting the use of federal funds for abortion, and one must conclude that something odd is happening. Why are we suddenly so worried about the family?

One factor might be the rising divorce rate. Mary Jo Bane, in her sound and level-headed book (from which I have taken most of the statistics in this article), estimates that between 30 and 40 per cent of the marriages of American women born between the years 1940 and 1944 will end in divorce, as compared to a figure of 12 per cent for women born between 1900 and 1940. Yet this statistic is not necessarily as alarming as it may seem—except of course if one takes a moral position against divorce, which fewer and fewer people seem to be doing these days. If one does not take such a position and if one is concerned about divorce on other grounds—that it means children will be raised in institutions, for instance, or by relatives, or that women will be left without support for themselves and their children, then there is less ground for worry. As Professor Bane shows, the percentage of women remarrying after divorce is also rising, along with the divorce rate, so that the percentage of children living with a single parent has not increased as rapidly as rising divorce rates suggest.

Moreover, if the divorce rate has been going up, the death rate among young parents has been going down, so that a kind of statistical exchange has taken place between these two factors which break up families. The availability of welfare does have something to do with rising rates of divorce and separation, but would we want to deny the divorce option to women in impossible marriages on these grounds—especially when evidence of the impact of divorce as such upon children does not necesarily show that it is for the worse? Finally, the economic effects of divorce are mitigated in many cases by the enormous increase in the percentage of women who work—even women with small children.

Are we then worried about the family because of the rising rate of illegitimacy? This strikes me as a serious matter, but none of the books I discuss in this article pays much attention to it, and indeed one could argue that changing public and private attitudes toward illegitimacy make illegitimacy as such somewhat less of a social problem these days.

Could it then be the drop in the birth rate that is worrying us? Hardly likely, when just a few years ago we worried about the opposite problem, and when we are still concerned about our persistent youth unemployment. No, the precipitous drop in births does not in itself worry most people, though it is worrisome to a group like the Jews who have a very low birth rate to begin with, and it may well prove worrisome to the general population in the future, as we continue to deal with the complications caused by having a very fertile and a very poor people on our southern border. But although we may one day hear voices raised suggesting that if there were more Americans there might be fewer Mexicans and others flowing into the country, legally and illegally, that day is still far off.

NATHAN GLAZER, professor of education and social structure at Harvard, is currently with the Russell Sage Foundation. His many books include *Affirmative Discrimination, Remembering the Answers*, and, with Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*.

**Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged*, by Christopher Lasch, Basic Books, 230 pp., $12.95.

† *Here to Stay: American Families in the Twentieth Century*, by Mary Jo Bane, Basic Books, 195 pp., $11.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Are we then fearful that the sharp increase in working mothers (from 12 per cent of married mothers of children under six in 1950, to nearly 40 per cent in 1974) may affect the family by causing more children to be, or to feel themselves to be, neglected, and hence to become runaways or delinquents? Once again, it is not clear that the fact that mothers work is bad for children. And though the present number of delinquent and runaway children is hardly an occasion for rejoicing, we have probably reached a plateau in this area.

Finally, are we concerned about the recent, rather startling increase in the number of young people living together without being married? Here again, we may have more reason to be confused than to be worried, for it is by no means certain that this kind of living arrangement is necessarily more unstable than marriage, or for that matter that it is replacing marriage; one rather suspects that it is simply postponing marriage until such time as children are conceived. And even if not, is this necessarily bad? In Denmark, for example, legal marriage seems to be on the way out for young people, which is not surprising, when wives are expected to work as well as husbands, when children are provided with substantial state benefits and services regardless of whether their parents are married or not, and when there seems to be no particular legal advantage to marriage for either parent, or for their children. We are still rather far from the Danish situation, but we are certainly closer to it than we used to be.

WHY then the present concern with the family? I see five significant sources of concern, each quite different and all leading in different directions. The first is the situation of the black family in America. The proportion of poor black children born illegitimate, raised by a single parent, and living on welfare has reached very high levels in recent years, presumably with some effect on health, scholastic achievement, delinquency, employment, and so forth: yet even now, a decade after the Moynihan Report first raised this issue, it is still not quite proper to talk about it directly and honestly. The recent spate of books and articles on the subject of the family have had little if anything to say about the black family in particular and the matter seems to have been permanently shelved. Yet it continues to smolder in the public consciousness, the more so for its very undiscussability. I myself am as convinced today as I was when I wrote about the black family in *Beyond the Melting Pot* fifteen years ago that nothing much can be done about this grave issue of social welfare until blacks themselves do it.

The second factor prompting our current concern for the family is the women's movement. If we are today discussing such questions as abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the public support of day care, it is primarily because of the women's movement which, in its more radical phases and segments, has also mounted an attack on the traditional family for its "exploitation" of women as wives, mothers, and daughters. The radical tradition of attacking the "bourgeois" family draws today primarily on the women's movement for its continuation.

Not surprisingly, a backlash has developed, so that by now there also exists a second women's movement—focusing mainly on opposition to abortion and to the ERA. This second movement, as Peter Skerry points out, draws its support chiefly from women of lower economic and educational status, whose self-esteem and self-image are bound up with being mothers and housewives, and who feel threatened by demands for equal career opportunities and by the implication that women who do not choose careers are somehow inadequate. Between the charges of the women's movement and the countercharges of the anti-women's movement, virtually every question about family life that could conceivably have been raised has found its way into public debate.

A fourth source of concern is middle-class uneasiness—about changes in the behavior of children, adolescents, and young adults, about the responsibility of parents to deal with these changes, about their capacity to do so, their right to do so, and about the values on the basis of which they should act.

Finally, there is the enormous expansion of the role of the state in our private lives, and the growing public consciousness of it. There is hardly an issue now on which we do not expect the state to act, and hardly a problem for which we do not assign responsibility to the state, either for having created it, or for exacerbating it, or for having failed to pay proper attention to it. If our children are turning out differently from the way we would like, we suspect it is first of all because of state-funded public education and state-regulated television; we blame the state for not suppressing drugs, or for suppressing them too harshly, for permitting our children to drink, or for penalizing them when they do, for expanding their rights, or for not expanding them fast enough, for not providing enough cash support, health care, psychiatric care, day care—or for providing too much. This growing concern about state action does not of course relieve us of our own guilt about our children, but since child care is no longer handled entirely by parents, relatives, and the larger intimate community, since, indeed, the public realm—through schooling, television, services, family courts, probation officers—is inevitably involved, it is quite proper to challenge what the state does: inevitably, the family, like everything else, reaches the public agenda.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II

CHRISTOPHER LASCH's book deals primarily with this last source of concern—the book is chiefly an attack on the state for the myriad ways in which it impinges upon the family, the sort of attack one might have expected from a conservative or traditionalist, but hardly from a representative of the radical Left. Professor Lasch does not, let it be said, take the easy route of condeming only the bourgeois state while exculpating the socialist or Communist state. If nothing else, he is consistent in apparently demanding no public intervention whatsoever into the private realm of the family, no matter what political arrangement prevails. How he maintains his position as a radical while upholding this view is an interesting question, and one which tells us much about the style of radical scholarship today.

Professor Lasch looks with skepticism on just about every liberal reform that has ever been made in the area of child welfare and family life. He manages to sound sarcastic even when writing about the abolition of child labor, or the advent of compulsory education, and he is scarcely more forgiving of those reformers who sought to remove children from the jurisdiction of criminal courts:

> The juvenile court movement rested on the belief that juvenile delinquency originated in deformed homes. Accordingly, the juvenile delinquent was to be treated not as a criminal, but as a victim of circumstances. In order to give him the "protection" of the law, humanitarian reformers created a new type of criminal equity, probation, and endowed probation officers with many of the rights of parenthood.

In all these cases, Professor Lasch is presumably defending the rights of parenthood against the incursions of arrogant outsiders, and perhaps with some justice. But he seems almost willfully indifferent to the fact that children have benefited enormously from these reforms. So far as juvenile and family courts are concerned, many children come under their jurisdiction specifically at the request of their parents, and there is simply no question but that the advantages of separate juridical arrangements for children far outweigh the many problems that have admittedly developed in their wake.

But it is not the reformers alone who incur Professor Lasch's scorn. He is no less critical of the liberal sociologists of "marriage and the family" who in his view looked on with equanimity while the role of the family continued to dwindle, and as its authority was stolen away. What is more, he seems to be half-blaming them for this development, thought it is hard to understand how these hapless representatives of one of the least influential branches of an uninfluential discipline could have had much effect on anything. Indeed, Professor Lasch has a consistent problem in this book of confusing what has actually happened to the family with what people said was happening, or what they might have wanted to happen. Thus, he exaggerates, to my mind, the role of the "helping professions"—psychologists, psychiatrists, family sociologists, etc.—in shaping family life in the 20's and 30's, a period during which they allegedly appropriated the parental function. The family sociologists he views kindly are, interestingly enough, the conservative ones: Carle Zimmerman, he writes, at least "has no illusions about the decay of traditional forms and the difficulty of finding substitutes." The Moynihan Report on the black family too comes off much better here than it has in the analyses of other radicals. What is wrong with it, according to Professor Lasch, is not that it misstates the facts about the black family, or that it underestimates the strength of the matriarchal and other substitutes for the patriarchal family, but only that "it exaggerates the distance between the ghetto and the rest of American culture. . . . [T]he increasingly dangerous and unpredictable conditions of middle-class life give rise to similar strategies for survival."

Christopher Lasch is a Freudian, and as such is strongly committed both to the truth and to the desirability of Freud's model of psychological development within the family. He rejects out-of-hand the criticism that the family as described by Freud, with its basis in the Oedipus complex, was historically and socially conditioned, rooted in the particular circumstances of turn-of-the century Vienna, and hence irrelevant to our own concerns. Professor Lasch maintains to the contrary that the Freudian family dynamic is applicable to all societies at all times, that it is grounded not in any given social structure, but rather in biology itself. It is not the Viennese family, or the 19th-century family, or the middle-class family, or the bourgeois family that Freud was describing, but rather *the* family, a fundamental biological reality, and to tamper with it is accordingly to court disaster. Thus, he calls the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski to task for suggesting that family dynamics might differ in different societies, and criticizes Margaret Mead for her studies of Samoan society which, by denying the necessity of a period of turbulence during adolescence, in effect dissented from the Freudian model.

Even the theoreticians of the Frankfurt school, with its mixture of Hegel, Marx, and Freud, were not quite on the right track in Professor Lasch's view, because of their attack on the authoritarian-patriarchal family, in which they saw both the consequences of capitalism and the roots of fascism. To Professor Lasch, the opposite is true —"the rise of a new type of despotism does not depend on the authoritarian family, but precisely on its dissolution"—though he concedes that in its better moments the Frankfurt school understood

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the authoritarian family often did act as a safeguard against despotism. It was, after all, the leader of the Frankfurt school, Max Horkheimer himself, who pointed out that the bourgeois family "not only educates for authority in bourgeois society; it also cultivates the dream of a better society."

AT THIS point in Professor Lasch's analysis we begin to understand how the pessimistic and apparently conservative views of Freud on human destiny can be enlisted in the cause of radical hope: he sees in the family a kind of cradle of the revolution, a source of energy for later resistance against despotism, but only when the family's natural dynamic has not been undercut and subverted by the Meads, the Fromms, and the Horneys, with their optimism about the human condition, or by the ministrations of mental-health enthusiasts and liberal family sociologists, with their claim that scientific progress can modify the harshness of repression and mitigate the pains of achieving adult sexuality. It was presumably such traditional authoritarian families that produced Marx and Engels, Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin, Gramsci and Mao—or indeed, the revolutionary hero of one's choice. What Professor Lasch seems to be saying here, in effect, is a more sophisticated version of the old radical notion that for things to get better, they must first get worse, and a little mitigating reform is a dangerous thing.

In fact, his skepticism about the benefits of gradual change reaches back to a point well before the bourgeois family came into being. Just about every change that has ever been made in family arrangements seems to have been for the worse in his opinion, possibly including even the creation of the bourgeois family itself. The attractiveness to Professor Lasch of the pre-industrial past that was undermined by capitalism, industry, science, and the rise of the professionals keeps breaking through. He sounds on occasion as though he were defending even its darkest aspects. Thus, he writes at one point that "the attack on disease was part of a general attack on pre-industrial customs. It went hand in hand with the suppression of public executions, the movement to institutionalize the insane, and the campaign to replace domestic riot and licentiousness with domestic bliss. . . ." If this does not precisely constitute advocacy of disease, public executions, or public baiting of the insane, it certainly suggests that the author is not happy with what replaced them. The promised "domestic bliss" turns out to have been a fraud, first of all because the therapeutic professionals in Professor Lasch's view simply did not know as much as they claimed to.

Here he adds his voice to the growing radical critique of the professions—both that of medicine and the lesser examples—attributing their rise during the modern period not to any increase in knowledge but only to a desire for power and monopoly modeled on analogous developments in the world of capitalist industry. Just as capitalist methods of production undermined the competence of the workers, so did the professionals' invasion of the family undermine the sense of competence of parents—and with deplorable results for the family: the father, weakened, yielded to the mother who, in turn, unable to cope, called upon the fraudulent assistance of so-called professionals in family management. The parents, increasingly helpless, could do nothing but stand by and watch as their children, far from prospering under their new freedom, incurred a variety of psychic ills from homosexuality to impotence—paying the price for disruption of the natural, biologically-based family configuration.

HAVING followed him this far, I will not even try to explain how Professor Lasch manages to tie all this in with capitalism, for his explanation, if we can call it that, has more in common with incantation than with analysis. Mainly, it seems to consist of invoking, at points both appropriate and inappropriate, such phrases as "the machinery of organized domination," "the manipulative spirit . . . ascendant in business life," etc., etc. Unfortunately, Professor Lasch shares with many other contemporary radical theorists the tendency to use extravagant and irrelevant terminology to suggest connections which simply make no sense at all between capitalism and all sorts of other unrelated social developments. One of the sociologists of whom he approves, for example, the rather engaging family sociologist, Willard Waller, wrote an interesting study of "courtship" patterns on American campuses during the 20's. He showed, Professor Lasch writes, "that activities ostensibly undertaken for pure pleasure had been invaded by the . . . machinery of organized domination. . . ." I suppose this means that it was the dark forces of industrial capitalism, operating presumably through advertising, which governed the "dating and rating complex" of college youth, thereby causing great unhappiness on the campus. But does it really take this to explain why young people in the throes of late adolescence often feel miserable, insecure, and inadequate in each other's company?

So taken up is Professor Lasch with theorizing that he manages to ignore the concrete actualities of state intervention into the affairs of the family. He has almost nothing to say, for example, about the massive intervention that is inevitably involved in providing welfare, food subsidies, Medicaid and Medicare, child-care programs like Head Start, as well as the large variety of other state services which expanded so enormously during the 60's and whose impact on children and the family we are perpetually trying to gauge. It would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seem that anyone concerned with how the state, wittingly or unwittingly, has affected the family, would have to enter into the history, intentions, and unanticipated consequences of these programs, but Professor Lasch is virtually silent on the subject. Instead, we are numbed with grand but obscure phrases such as "the socialization of reproduction" and the "proletarianization of parenthood." They suggest that the writer, struggling with his conservative instincts, is trying to save his radical credentials by invoking the proper spells.

III

For more specific prescriptions for our current dilemmas, we may turn to Selma Fraiberg's engaging, delightful, and yet very serious book, *Every Child's Birthright: In Defense of Mothering.** As a Freudian analyst, Dr. Fraiberg, too, is worried about what is happening to our children—more precisely, to young children, for the early months of life are the most important ones to her in forming those human bonds that are the basis for later psychological growth and for the capacity to enter into satisfying and moral human relationships. Yet for all her emphasis, as a Freudian, on the earliest months of life, one of the most impressive things about the book is Dr. Fraiberg's willingness to engage in a thoroughgoing scrutiny of current social policies in an effort to explain why things are going wrong and what we might do about it.

Dr. Fraiberg bases her arguments on the simple proposition that babies, in order to develop properly, need mothering—they need physical contact with someone who cares for them, who responds to their cries and attempts at communication, who fulfills their need for food, for bodily care, for emotional and physical security. This simple proposition leads her to a rather unorthodox stance in current debates on social policy: she does not see how we are going to provide mothering—without which psychological damage is assured—unless mothers do it. In making this point, Dr. Fraiberg persuasively combines psychoanalytic theory with down-to-earth descriptions of just what is entailed in trying to provide for adequate child care while mothers go to work. She also throws a considerable monkey wrench into the current debates about day care, which so many family and child-care experts have been advocating as the next great necessity to be provided by the state, and which indeed *is* essential if welfare reform is to include, as both Presidents Nixon and Carter seem to have agreed it must, the requirement that mothers be available for work outside the home.

Dr. Fraiberg coolly points out just how many mother substitutes will be needed if women on welfare are encouraged, or required, to work, and how hard it will be to come up with such substitutes in this country at the present time. Those large families which in earlier times could supply older siblings to take care of the young hardly exist any more, and even where they do, the older siblings are likely to be at school. We no longer trust grandparents, once a major source of mother substitutes, and even if we did, they are no longer willing to do the job. We have no orders of religious celibates like the ones in Europe, for example, which have traditionally provided excellent care for children in institutions,† nor do we have any of those "simple village girls" who were once the mainstay of large families with many children. And even if we did, the chances are they would flee the task like the plague, preferring factory work, clerical work, or any other work to the job of taking care of children.

The simple fact that we can no longer find people that any sensible mother would trust to take care of her children would seem to be a decisive element in the current discussion about institutionalized child care. We could of course create professionals to do the job —as we have already done, to some extent—but then we would have to pay them too much to make it economically feasible; and in any case, child-care professionals tend to remove themselves as fast as they can from the grubby job of actually taking care of babies and small children, so that in the end we are dependent on babysitters and mother's helpers, often drawn from the bottom of the labor pool. As often as not, they are themselves mothers, who, in order to mind other people's children, are forced to leave their own children inadequately cared for somewhere else.

In making her case, Selma Fraiberg is quite aware that she is not bringing very good news to the many mothers who for one reason or another do go out to work. But it is at least honest news. On the other hand, she is very sympathetic to the plight of mothers who work, whether because they need to or want to, and she also has some useful suggestions as to how best to go about it. Beyond this, she has one urgent and practical piece of advice: instead of appropriating billions of dollars of federal money to create a system of child care that is guaranteed to do much worse for children than care by their own mothers, we should assist those mothers on welfare who want to take care of their own children in doing so, if only because it is likely to cost more to provide care for a working moth-

*Basic Books, 162 pp., $8.95.

† See, for example, a fascinating book by Jean Charnley, *An American Social Worker in Italy* (University of Minnesota Press, 1961). Mrs. Charnley went to Italy to help persuade Italians that children should be raised in foster homes, not in institutions, which crippled children emotionally. She was surprised to discover that Italian child-care institutions, run by nuns and monks, did not seem to have the same effect on children in their care as American ones, perhaps because the children were in the care of men and women who had chosen what they were doing as a sacred vocation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er's children than it is to provide support for a non-working mother and her children. But a mother on welfare, Selma Fraiberg insists, needs more money to take proper care of her children than we are now providing. A rather sobering analysis, all in all, and one which should make us wonder whether we really should be putting so much weight in our current welfare-reform proposals on getting mothers into the labor force.

In the end, Selma Fraiberg, like Christopher Lasch, is uneasy about tampering with the traditional family. Despite her commitment to science and research, she ends up invoking what she calls "The Tribal Guardians," those beneficent aunts and grandparents and neighbors who form a kind of protective circle around mothers and help them to care for their children far better than unionized and professionalized child-rearers and child-minders could possibly do. Unlike Professor Lasch, Dr. Fraiberg makes no attempt to establish portentous connections between the state of industrial capitalism and the state of the family—she is simply worried about the children. Still, it is interesting that a liberal like Selma Fraiberg and a radical like Christopher Lasch should join in celebrating so conservative and old-fashioned a structure as the traditional family.

IV

MARY JO BANE is too sober and commonsensical to commend to us the authoritarian and/or patriarchal family, and too down-to-earth to appeal to "tribal guardians," but she too seems to have undergone a curious reversal. She tells us quite candidly that when she began her research on the contemporary family she had expected quite a different outcome. Since the family was undergoing such rapid changes, she had expected to discover that we should be "developing public institutions to replace [it] with other forms of living arrangements and other methods of child care." Instead, the more she delved into the data, the more she became convinced "that the time has not yet come to write obituaries for the American family or divide up its estate."

Like Christopher Lasch, though in a more critical spirit, Mary Jo Bane too examines the evidence on change in the American family only to conclude that while many changes have indeed taken place, they are not really all that decisive. Thus, she argues, as I pointed out earlier, that divorce now merely replaces death as a cause of family disruption, while higher remarriage rates moderate the effects of divorce. She also points out that much of what has been taken as evidence of crisis can be explained by simple demography. For example, the fact that so many old people live alone today is frequently offered as evidence of cruelty and indifference on the part of children toward parents. Professor Bane, however, offers the useful observation that many of these elderly people live alone because they *have* no children. People who were sixty-five in 1970, she writes, "were members of a generation born around the turn of the century that had low marriage rates and high rates of childlessness . . . almost a quarter have no children . . . to take them in." Similarly, the fact that we no longer depend on the extended family for help as we used to is often cited as evidence of anomie and social breakdown. But Professor Bane reminds us that we depend on the extended family less these days than we used to because there are fewer members to depend on, owing to the decline in family size. Indeed, the figures she provides on how frequently Americans do visit their relatives are surprisingly high, considering that there are so many fewer relatives around to visit, and that they are frequently separated from one another by great distances.

Mary Jo Bane is perhaps a bit too sanguine about the state of the family today, particularly when judged in the light of Selma Fraiberg's data on troubled children. Still, it is interesting to observe that she, too, from a completely different perspective, is rather lukewarm to the idea of extensive subsidized day care outside the family. The grounds for her opposition are not psychological—she is prepared to accept the argument that day-care centers and the like do no worse by children than mothers do. Rather, they are purely economic: day care would amount to a "massive transfer of public funds to families of small children in which both parents want to work. . . . I can see no particular reason to prefer women who want to work to women who want to care for their own children." Mary Jo Bane takes this view, moreover, notwithstanding her commitment to full equality for women.

V

INTERESTINGLY enough, this also seems to be the view of Kenneth Keniston and other members of the Carnegie Council on Children in *All Our Children: The American Family Under Pressure.** In their report, they assert that "Children need adults who are deeply attached to them, who know them so intimately that they can distinguish a cry of hunger from a cry of fatigue . . . we believe that parents are still the world's greatest experts about the needs of their own children." But if Keniston and the Council do not propose a massive, federally funded system of day care, that is about the only federal program for the family they do not embrace.

In the view of the Council, the family has been unable to fulfill its role primarily because of poverty. They report that 15 per cent of the nation's chil-

*Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 255 pp., $10.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dren live in families under the poverty line as defined by the government, and 25 per cent live in families receiving less than 50 per cent of the national median income. Given these statistics, which, the Council maintains, make good parental care of children hard or impossible, parents should not feel responsible for their family problems:

> When they blame themselves, American parents define their family problems as somehow rooted in themselves. They thereby neglect basic questions: how to give parents more power outside the family, how to make distribution of rewards in our society more just, how to limit the risk of technology. Time and again, parents have asked what they themselves are doing wrong, not how the society is pressuring them. They have asked how to change the victims of our social order rather than how to change the forces that victimize. . . . Besides worrying about report cards and pediatricians and growing pains, they should worry about jobs, the structure of the labor market, and the degree of social justice in the nation.

Having absolved parents of responsibility for parental failure, *All Our Children* goes on to propose a reduction in the rate of unemployment, a federal guarantee of work, a replacement of food stamps and other redistributive programs with one very large tax-credit entitlement (which would incidentally require a radical recasting of the federal tax system), national health insurance, additional child-care supplements for single parents who choose not to work, more affirmative action, more extensive social services with universal access, more parent participation in planning, monitoring, and running these services, and many other things.

Any one of these proposals would require extended space to be discussed seriously. I doubt the strategic wisdom of pegging this vast agenda to the question of family policy, and I rather doubt also that many parents are likely to stop worrying about their children's problems in order to worry more about income maintenance, tax reform, and so forth. Nor is it likely that if the weight of parental interests and efforts could be radically redirected from the little commonwealth to the larger one, the condition of children—even the one-eighth or one-quarter who should by the Council's definition be considered poor—would be much improved. This is not to deny that the Keniston report contains some good ideas here and there; but, like most committee reports, this one embraces more proposals than even the most enlightened citizenry on earth could be expected to accept, or pay for, as well as some which turn out to be mutually contradictory.

Some of the most specific proposals deal with the legal protection of children—not surprisingly, since two public-interest lawyers served on the Council—but some are so outlandish that one wishes there had been an anti-lawyer or two on hand to restrain the proceedings. For example, since children have been winning the right in court to get medical services without their parents' permission or knowledge (drug treatment and abortion are the big issues here), the report proposes that children be entitled to file claims and receive benefits under their family's health-insurance policies without parental permission. This is admittedly an extreme example, but even mong the more moderate proposals in the section on children's rights, there is a worrisome tendency to advocate the rights of children against their parents, as though these were on a par with their rights against industry, the state, the school system, and so on. But one wonders whether this sort of thing is quite the way to go about strengthening parents for the difficult task of rearing children —another objective of the Council—just as one wonders whether the Council's choice of methods does not wind up in the end by strengthening government instead, through whose hands all these new benefits and services and rights would presumably flow.

But though one may be legitimately skeptical about the likelihood of these grand social reforms coming about in the near future—or ever—such skepticism is not warranted in the area of children's rights. We have, after all, already seen a great deal of movement in this area, and while such things as federal job guarantees, income maintenance, tax reform, and so forth all require legislation and appropriations, the extension of children's rights requires only able lawyers and judges open to persuasion, and we have plenty of both. Whether or not this will ultimately benefit children—or their families—depends on whether one sees children as a helpless minority abused by parents, schools, state officials, and industry—or whether one sees them, on the whole, as still in need of authority to be properly raised, educated, and kept healthy, and whether one sees the extension of rights as supporting or undermining that authority.

VI

That government must impinge on the family is clear: how could it not, with its tax policies, its housing policies, its credit and monetary policies, its health, education, and welfare policies, and indeed its policies on almost everything else we can think of? As the web of government activities becomes more extensive and their interrelationships more complex, simple solutions seem less and less likely. Selma Fraiberg, for example, thinks welfare mothers would do better if they got more money and could manage better housing, and if the neighborhoods in which they live could be improved (and she is writing,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one should remember, in the state of Michigan, which does very well by its welfare mothers, compared to the national average). Who could possibly contradict her in this assertion? Yet Dr. Fraiberg cannot advise us how to go about convincing taxpayers to come up with more money, or how to go about improving neighborhoods (improving housing is hard enough). The Carnegie Council demands a great deal more income as of right for mothers, yet Mary Jo Bane points out that research from the income-maintenance experiments shows—as we might expect—that more families break up when mothers get more income as of right, and also that the remarriage rate for welfare mothers drops as their benefits go up. How do we balance more money for mothers against the likelihood of a higher separation rate and a lower remarriage rate? When government tries to achieve every good, some goods inevitably conflict with others. The construction of a family policy that satisfies a broad range of interests will not be easy.

On balance, it would seem that certain traditional arrangements, whether they are biologically determined or have been learned at some primordial stage of social development, work pretty well, and that despite the age-old hopes of radicals of both Left and Right, there is no better way to raise children than the family (as Churchill said of democracy, it is the worst way—except for all the others). But as our dependence on state action expands, the family is inevitably affected, not so drastically as Christopher Lasch insists, but seriously enough to warrant concern. As traditional arrangements begin to seem more attractive to more and more of us, whether we call ourselves radicals or liberals or conservatives, and whether we argue from history, psychoanalysis, or demographic and economic analysis, our problem is how to go about protecting these arrangements, at once so strong and so profoundly fragile, from the effects of growing state intervention.

On one question, at least, these four studies—otherwise so very different—are remarkably in agreement: they all reject the major policy proposal around which the cause of family reform coalesced only a few years ago. The new consensus (though it is not so new—these matters are cyclical) seems to hold that if money is to be given away for the care of children, it should be given not to agencies but to mothers to enable them to take better care of their own children within the family setting. This seems reasonable to me, provided we remember that no step in social policy can be simple at this point, when so much of the ground has been occupied (and more than once) by earlier, and often radically different, programs. More money for mothers is a good slogan, but putting it into practice, we are discovering today (as we discovered in 1969 with the Family Assistance Plan), is no easy matter. Still, we do at least seem to have arrived at a consensus that public policy should sustain the traditional family, the unimproved (or only slightly improved) model—and this is a welcome surprise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Politics and Amnesty International

Stephen Miller

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is an independent human-rights organization which issues regular reports on violations of human rights throughout the world and works for the release of what it calls Prisoners of Conscience (political prisoners who have neither used nor advocated violence). The organization, which boasts an overall membership of 168,000, is based in London but has national sections in 33 countries and individual members in 107. In this country, Amnesty International USA has chapters in 32 states and last year had a budget of $750,000.

According to AI, in the sixteen years of its existence it has helped secure the release of more than 13,000 prisoners. But it is only in the last few years that the organization has itself attained international prominence, culminating in the award to it of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1977. As the Nobel Committee said in its citation: "In a world of increasing brutality, internationalization of violence, terrorism, and torture, Amnesty International used its forces for the protection of human values." No doubt the luster of a Nobel Prize will enable AI to increase its membership and to increase as well the amount of money it raises.

A widely respected organization, AI has emerged in recent years as the most powerful lobbying group in the world for human rights, and has earned the support (at least in the United States) of persons of all political persuasions. Though some of its findings have been disputed, its reports are generally regarded as impartial and reasonably accurate. But now that it has come of age and promises to become even more influential in the future, AI would seem to deserve a closer look—a task that is aided by the recent publication of a 352-page annual report that is the most extensive in the organization's history.* For there may be serious problems, both with the theory by which AI operates—particularly on the issue of what it includes under the rubric of human rights—and with its practice.

II

AT FIRST glance it might seem impossible to arrive at any universal agreement about what constitutes a violation of human rights. Many people believe, for instance, that because Western legal and cultural traditions differ fundamentally from non-Western traditions, no consensus can be reached on the definition of human rights. In China, John K. Fairbank points out, the notion of civil liberties does not exist. "Habeas corpus, presumptive innocence, right of counsel, no self-incrimination, jury trial, and other civil liberties depend on the supremacy of law," he writes, "but Chinese tradition and practice do not accept the supremacy of law. . . ." And what about the Islamic law that condemns persons to death by stoning for committing adultery, fornication, or sodomy? (According to AI, three men were executed in this manner in Saudi Arabia last year.)

Against such views, Peter L. Berger has argued that some actions are indeed universally considered as violations of human rights ("Are Human Rights Universal?" COMMENTARY, September 1977). Among those he lists are genocide, torture, forced labor, the forced separation of families, and religious persecution. According to Berger, in condemning these as violations of human rights "we can call upon a consensus far wider than that of Western civilization. That consensus emerges from all the major world cultures, especially in their religious foundations. . . ."

Berger's list is one that most people in the world would accept—one, moreover, that AI has generally followed in husbanding its limited resources. Thus, a good deal of its time and money is devoted exclusively to the question of torture. Last year, AI's Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, which is a major part of its overall program, published pamphlets on *Evidence of Torture: Studies by the Amnesty International Danish Medical Group* and on *Professional Codes of Ethics*, the latter dealing in part with the responsibilities of the medical profession in connection with torture. Moreover, AI often issues reports on torture in particular countries. It is hard to say whether the campaign has been effective in reducing torture throughout the world; but it is clear that the fact that torture has come to be recognized as an international problem is in large part due, as AI justifiably says, to "Amnesty International's years of campaigning on the issue."

STEPHEN MILLER has contributed essays on politics and public policy to COMMENTARY, *Encounter*, the *American Scholar*, and other periodicals.

* *Amnesty International Report 1977*, Amnesty International Publications, $3.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In addition to its preoccupation with torture, however, AI is also on record as opposing "by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties. . . ." In this, AI follows the language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948. But AI does not merely pay lip service to the UN Declaration; it is quite insistent about its opposition to the death penalty. Martin Ennals, AI's Secretary General, says that "Amnesty International's opposition to torture and the death penalty is *absolute* and embraces all cases *regardless of the nature of the offenses involved*" (emphasis added). And, as if to stress the seriousness of its commitment, AI has planned a year-long educational and publicity campaign on the death penalty—an effort that began last December with an international conference in Stockholm.

Now, the death penalty is clearly a very different matter from the practice of torture. Many countries have laws that authorize the death penalty for certain crimes, whereas there are no laws authorizing torture. Torture by its very nature is outside all legal systems, something that is practiced clandestinely and arbitrarily. As known law, the death penalty is subject to debate, adjudication, amendment, even abolition; torture is not. It is thus one thing for AI to protest against the widespread practice, in Ethiopia, of "extra-judicial execution," another name for mass terror. It is another thing to intervene, as AI did in France, to try to commute the sentence of a man convicted of "attempted rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl," or to mount an Urgent Action campaign—massive letter-writing and telegrams—to prevent the execution of Gary Gilmore, a convicted double murderer, in Utah last year. One need not be in favor of the death penalty to recognize the elementary distinction here between cases of criminal behavior which no society can leave unpunished and cases of government injustice that are acknowledged as such by most of the human community.

AI seems determined to move into other areas that, as with the death penalty, are only tangentially related to its original concerns. In the United States, where, as AI admits, there is no overt political imprisonment, it nevertheless suspects that "many people may be 'framed' on criminal charges because of their political activities or ethnic origin. . . ." By "political" AI seems to mean racial, for AI has intervened almost exclusively on behalf of blacks and American Indians. A recent article in the Washington *Post* took a close look at the case of these so-called political prisoners cited by AI, and it does seem that in several instances there were serious abuses in the handling of the trial. Yet here too questions may be raised. Some—perhaps many—criminal trials in the United States may not be "fair," but any number of reasons may account for this, having nothing whatever to do with politics. Furthermore, the case of someone convicted of criminal charges in a country which knows the right of further legal appeal, and even of petition to political authorities, is miles apart from the case of someone convicted of clearly trumped-up criminal charges in a country where Western legal traditions are nonexistent or exist on paper only. As with its blanket opposition to the death penalty, AI's argument ignores such important distinctions.

AI's intervention in a number of criminal trials in the United States is in line with the very broad view it takes of Prisoners of Conscience, whom it defines as persons who "are imprisoned, detained, restricted, or otherwise subjected to physical coercion or restriction by reason of their political, religious, or other conscientiously held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origin, color, or language, provided that they have not used or advocated violence." That this definition applies to an Anatoly Shcharansky is obvious, but it has also led AI to spend time on behalf of Jehovah's Witnesses, who in many countries go to jail not because they refuse induction into the military but because they refuse even to apply for conscientious-objector status. Aside from the fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves apparently resent AI's intrusion into their affairs, it seems plain that in calling such people Prisoners of Conscience the organization is willfully overstepping the line between persecuted "beliefs" and those negative actions—a refusal to serve in the army or to pay an income tax—which the state surely has a right to punish.

III

THE increasingly indiscriminate attitude AI has been taking toward the question of what constitutes a violation of human rights has resulted, in turn, in the emergence in its literature of a strange picture of the landscape of injustice. A country that has a strong tradition of respect for human rights in general and civil liberties in particular may look bad in AI's eyes if it executes a number of convicted criminals in any given year. Conversely, a country with an "enlightened" criminal code—i.e., no death penalty—may escape AI's censure while quietly doing away with countless political undesirables. In AI's annual report for 1977, Switzerland rates two paragraphs for violations of human rights whereas North Korea rates only one. In the United States, where even the existence of the category itself is open to question, AI has "adopted" 14 Prisoners of Conscience; in Cuba, where thousands rot in prison camps, AI has a mere 25.

If its indiscriminate application of central concepts has led to a distortion in AI's work, the curious fact about that distortion is that, with an important exception, it obeys the logic of Left and Right. The world that confronts the reader of AI's recent literature—its newsletters, pamphlets, news releases, and the latest annual report—is one in which the regimes that seem to be the most scan-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dalously repressive are usually of the rightist variety, with Chile, the Philippines, Argentina, and Uruguay leading the pack, while those on the Left receive by comparison higher marks. The important exception is Communist Eastern Europe, and especially the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, countries to which AI pays very close attention indeed.

The fact that AI has received the support of Andrei Amalrik and Vladimir Bukovsky, and earned the public displeasure of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, certainly underlines its commitment in principle to exposing human-rights violations wherever they occur. Still, there are realities that AI must live with—realities subsumed under what might be called Moynihan's Law, after Daniel P. Moynihan's observation that the more voices we hear in a particular country protesting injustice, the less repressive that country is likely to be. AI is stuck with the news it can get, and it usually finds it easier to get news from countries that have rightist, authoritarian regimes—not to speak of countries that are democratic—than from countries whose governments are leftist and totalitarian. The consequence is that in AI's latest annual report, the same number of pages (four and a half) is devoted to Singapore as is devoted to China. Four pages are devoted to human-rights violations in West Germany, only two and a half to East Germany; three and a half pages to Chile, only two and a half to Cuba; four and a half pages to South Korea, only two to Cambodia.

The number of pages on each country obviously only tells part of the story; more important is the nature of the news being recounted. Here too the reports often "favor" leftist regimes, since the information available on their practices is usually very vague, whereas the information on rightist regimes is often detailed. About Cambodia, for example, AI says that reports of widespread killings, amounting really to genocide, have been denied by the foreign minister and "remain unverifiable because foreign journalists are not allowed to visit and information leaving the country is severely restricted." Needless to say, the reports on torture in the Philippines, Chile, and Uruguay—where the absolute numbers of victims are by comparison minuscule—are graphic and full.

The effect of AI's reports is thus to make rightist, authoritarian regimes look worse than leftist, totalitarian ones. Whether intentional or not, this is certainly in conformity with the view of things that prevails in the court of international public opinion, where rightist regimes suffer a kind of obloquy that leftist regimes rarely have to endure. Yet it should not need to be stressed that by a truly impartial yardstick, it is the regimes of the Left whose records are by far the more heinous. The Washington *Post* recently reported, for example, that for several days prior to President Pinochet's plebiscite in Chile, "Several thousand young people wound through downtown streets shouting 'no' and chanting slogans last heard more than four years ago during the government of leftist President Salvador Allende." And the New York *Times* recently reported that in South Korea, "more than 500 people packed a Christian center in downtown Seoul for 90 minutes of prayers mixed with denunciations of the suppression of human rights by the government of President Park Chung Hee." Can anyone imagine such demonstrations being allowed to take place in the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, Rumania, Vietnam, or North Korea? Or even, for that matter, in Hungary—the "model" leftist state? Yet it is Chile that remains the *bête noire* of "enlightened" opinion, and this is faithfully reflected in the literature of AI.

IV

Has AI, then, become politically biased? There is some evidence that this may be so. AI's literature tends to exhibit an automatic distrust of all rightist governments, and an equally automatic desire to give leftist governments—with the exception of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia—the benefit of the doubt. Thus, in its latest annual report, AI provides a rather low figure for the number of political prisoners in Vietnam—200,000—and then quotes without comment from a broadcast by Hanoi Radio which, in effect, justifies the current regime's program of "reeducation." According to Hanoi Radio, those who undergo prolonged "reeducation" in the new Vietnam include "members of the Green Berets, the rangers, the paratroops, marines, policemen, prison guards, district officials, village chiefs, and secret agents who were trained by the United States." In other words, they are only getting what they deserve. It is unclear why AI chose to let the government of Vietnam give its own explanation of the reasons for there being so many political prisoners in that country, but one thing *is* clear: AI *never* fails to question any statement by government officials of rightist regimes.

In its rundown of the situation in Cuba, to take another example, the way AI speculates about the number of political prisoners borders upon the evasive. "The figure of 4,000-5,000," it says, "put forward in *Amnesty International Report 1975-1976*, applies only to those prisoners whom the Cuban authorities . . . recognize as being detained on political charges. This category of prisoner appears to have become smaller in the last year; the total now lies between 2,000 and 3,000." This figure, according to AI, was "confirmed by Fidel Castro in a televised interview with the American journalist Barbara Walters in June 1977." Why, one wonders again, should Fidel Castro be allowed to confirm anything, when AI would never let the likes of a Pinochet or a Marcos or a Park Chung Hee do the same? But it is the misleading statistics that are more troubling here. In a recent article in *Christian Century*—one that is in the main favorable to Castro—Dean Peerman has quite a different story

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to tell. "Exile groups in Florida," he writes, "claim that there are more than 100,000 [political prisoners], but this is probably a highly inflated figure just as the figure cited by Castro—2,000 to 3,000 (in his interview with Barbara Walters)—is no doubt deflated. Latin Americanist Roger Fontaine of Georgetown University insists that Cuba's political prisoners number between 40,000 and 60,000, but most of the responsible estimates seem to range from 10,000 to 20,000."*

The language in which AI describes the situation in Cuba is remarkably restrained and diplomatic—as if AI wanted to reassure the Cubans that basically it thinks well of them. We learn that AI has "continued discussions" with Cuban officials, mainly through the UN, the purpose of which is "to explain the organization's concern—especially its concern over the situation of human rights in Cuba." AI also speaks of "lengthy discussions with officials" whom it met at a UN-sponsored conference in Cuba in 1976. In the analysis of Chile, on the other hand, the language is very different; instead of lengthy discussions, there is a worldwide publicity campaign, whose aims are "to arouse international opinion, to get from the Chilean authorities precise details about what had happened to these people and to demand an end to the 'disappearances'. . . ."

The attitude AI takes toward Chile is very much the attitude it takes toward other rightist governments. In a lead article on Argentina in the Winter 1977 issue of *Matchbox*, the newsletter of AI's American section, the 1,300 persons said to have been killed by government security forces there are categorized as those who "opposed the totalitarian regimes now in power in Uruguay and Argentina. . . ." Even aside from the fact that the current Argentine government is *not* totalitarian, it is amazing that an article on terror in Argentina should gloss over in one sentence, as this one does, the widespread incidence of *left*-wing terrorism there.

But such "exposés" of rightist regimes are not uncommon in AI's newsletters, despite the organization's proud insistence on its political neutrality. In the Fall 1977 issue of *Matchbox*, an article entitled "Manila Folder" attacks the government of the Philippines for holding an international conference on human rights when, in fact, the government systematically practices torture and detains people without trial. The author makes much of the contrast between the elegant hotel where the conferees were staying and the awful slum of Tondo, only a thirty-minute drive away. Where, one wonders, is a similar article on the international Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia held in Maputo, Mozambique, and attended by AI? According to AI's own statistics, approximately 100,000 persons are languishing in "reeducation" camps in that country. And where is the article on another UN-sponsored international conference (on apartheid) that AI attended in Havana, Cuba, in May 1976?

It is true that in its literature AI does not begin to approach the notorious bias of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, which has claimed that the only nations consistently employing torture, suppressing dissidents, and imprisoning political foes are Israel, South Africa, and Chile. But neither does AI stray far from that body's view of the world. "AI concerned at Arab prisoners' hunger-strike in Israel," went one news release last year. "AI concerned at Democratic Kampuchean [Cambodian] government's lack of response to appeals" went another—the *sole* release on Cambodia last year (as opposed to five on Chile). According to Jean Lacouture, the Cambodian government is carrying out "the bloodiest revolution in history," yet AI shows no more concern about it than about a prison hunger-strike in democratic Israel. It is hard to resist the conclusion that some policy, or at least some conscious set of attitudes, is at work behind AI's increasingly frequent practice of whispering softly when it comes to Vietnam, Cuba, China, and Cambodia but shouting vehemently when it comes to Argentina, Chile, the Philippines, and South Korea.

THE specter of the possible politicization of AI is brought home dramatically in a letter that recently appeared in the *New York Review of Books*. Signed by two members of the governing board of the American section of AI as well as by many others, the letter brands President Carter's human-rights policy as hypocritical, condemns repression in Eastern Europe, and also castigates the regimes of Iran, Chile, Brazil, South Korea, Argentina, South Africa, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Nothing is said about repression in Cambodia, Cuba, Vietnam, and China. But this is not all. The letter goes on to dwell on all manner of human "rights" that are, it says, violated by the *American* government: the "right" to abortion, the "right" to child-care facilities, the "right" to affirmative action in employment, education, and housing. This blatant enlistment of the language of human rights in the service of a partisan political position is a truly ominous sign. If it were an aberration from AI's habitual practice, there would be little cause to remark upon it. It seems more likely, however, that the organization as a whole is moving away from its original purpose, a concern with violations of human rights all over the world, to a selective and predictable partisanship. If this is really so, it will mark the ruination of an enterprise that has brought hope to many.

* In the February *Encounter*, Hugh Thomas, the noted authority on Cuba, reminds us that Castro himself fairly recently admitted the existence of some 23,000 political prisoners in Cuba. Thomas comments: "Rarely publicized by the world's philanthropic agencies, these half-forgotten prisoners continue their terrible travail, many of them in unspeakable conditions and without hope of release."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Modernism, the Germans & the Jews

Robert Alter

This Jewish obstinacy! Enough to make an anti-Semite of a man! This pride of race, this feeling of solidarity! Do you believe I am ever, in any of my actions, guided by the thought that I am "German" (perhaps, *qui le sait*)? Do you believe that Mozart composed as an "Aryan"? I know only two types of people: those with and those without talent.

—RICHARD STRAUSS, letter to Stefan Zweig, June 17, 1935*

To the love of the Jews for Germany there corresponded the emphatic distance with which the Germans encountered them. We may grant that with "distant love" the two partners could have managed more kindness, open-mindedness, and mutual understanding. But historical subjunctives are always illegitimate.

—GERSHOM SCHOLEM, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*

THE modern historical fate of Jews among the German-speaking peoples is a continuing source of puzzlement, wonder, and brooding reflection. It was here that the Jewish entry into modern European culture began, rapidly releasing, as has often been observed, an unprecedented torrent of creative energies, so that German and Austro-Hungarian Jews, within a generation or two of emergence from the ghetto or *shtetl*, became leading figures in the arts, and in intellectual and economic life, a few of them actually helping to transform prevalent conceptions of human nature and society. In many instances, of course, from Heine and Felix Mendelssohn to Marx and Georg Simmel, these signal contributions were made by Jews who had themselves converted to Christianity or who were the children of converts, and the powerful impulse to self-effacement in the most literal sense is surely one of the more dismaying themes of the German-Jewish story.

But our consciousness of this extraordinary movement outward into the expanses of the surrounding culture should not lead us to forget that the Germanic realm was also the seedbed for developments of supreme intrinsic importance to the survival of the Jewish people and the reshaping of its own culture. To be sure, these developments themselves had their "assimilatory" motives, but one could hardly refashion Jewish existence without emulating available models, and it was through such emulation that Jews acquired many of the intellectual and political tools for coping with a radically new historical predicament.

The revival of Hebrew as a secular literary language, which would eventually contribute to the emergence of a modern Jewish nationalism anchored in the Jewish past, began in 18th-century Koenigsberg and Berlin. (Over a century later, when the Hebraist movement had almost entirely migrated to Eastern Europe, its German background was still so keenly felt that proponents of the Hebrew Enlightenment were derisively referred to as "Berliners" by the defenders of tradition.) The study of Judaism as a rigorous academic discipline, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, to which we ultimately owe much of our historical self-understanding, began in 19th-century Germany, as did—at least at first, with somewhat less admirable results—the modern efforts to reform Jewish religion. By the end of the century, political Zionism was brought into being through the proddings of an Austro-Hungarian Jew working out of Vienna.

Whether we choose to focus on the Freuds and Wittgensteins or on the Graetzes and Herzls that Germanic Jewry produced, our vision of that whole richly ambiguous episode in history is bound to be enormously complicated, perhaps obfuscated, by the awareness that the systematic program for the extirpation of the Jewish people was conceived on German soil, shaped out of the authentic materials of 19th-century German ideologies and age-old German popular feeling. The danger of distorting the variegated facts of Wilhelminian Germany and late Hapsburg Austria by seeing them through the flames of the Nazi crematoria is a paramount concern of Peter Gay in his new book of essays, *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture*.† Gay is that rare scholar who combines immense learning with grace and lucidity, and there is something bracing about the way he reexamines with such poised reasonableness the most deeply entrenched views about the nature of modernism,

**A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig*, translated by Max Knight, University of California Press, 122 pp., $8.95.

† Oxford University Press, 289 pp., $12.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the role Jews have played in it, and the relation of Jews to recent German culture. His discussions of Freud's Vienna, the Berlin-Jewish spirit, the encounter of Jews with German modernism, provide valuable correctives to many prevalent simplifications, but at least some of his lucidity, I shall argue, is achieved by neglecting features of his subject that might tend to undermine his firm conception of it.

It is common to imagine the modernist stance as characteristically marginal, disaffected, oppositional to the dominant bourgeois culture, and to see a crucial congruence between this general adversary posture of modernism and the predicament of the Europeanized Jew, who had mastered all the nuanced idioms of Gentile society and yet was condemned to remain at least partly an outsider to it. Gay questions these views on several grounds. First, he makes the simple, convincing observation that in strictly numerical terms Jews were by no means so preponderant in the various modernist avant-gardes as they are usually thought to have been. It is only a mystique of the alienated Jewish intellectual—George Steiner's lyric celebrations of that figure come to mind—that could have attributed such cultural centrality to the marginal Jew, and Gay's demystification of this notion is most welcome.

With regard to modernism itself and the position of German Jews after the so-called Emancipation, Gay stresses, against prevalent conceptions, a strong theme of conformism in both cases. That is, he sees far more frequent instances than one generally allows in which the descendants of the ghetto dwellers succeeded in being simply Germans like everyone else, socially, culturally, and even psychologically. And in the case of modernism, he argues, with tact and deference, against observers like Lionel Trilling and Irving Howe who have defined modernism as primarily an adversary phenomenon, the anguished expression of the artist as pariah. Gay reminds us that in fact one also encounters powerfully celebratory, exuberant, life-affirming elements in the spectrum of modernist expression, and that many of the modernist masters maintained an unshaken allegiance to the social and moral values of the bourgeoisie from which they derived.

The argument about modernism is, I think, the more firmly grounded of Gay's two revisionist contentions. He of course does not deny that modernism in some phases has been destructively rebellious, impelled by a kind of spirituality of radical disgust, but he has a fine awareness of how we become the captive of our own forceful formulations of historical phenomena and thus fail to see their variety and contradictions.

He makes a telling case for the presence of social conservatism among the makers of revolutionary modernism in his admirable essay on Freud. Freud may have irrevocably changed the way we think about man, but he remained a loyal member of the bourgeoisie, not only in his personal habits but also in some of his guiding intellectual principles. His commitment to the positivist assumptions of 19th-century science and his demonstration, as Gay puts it, "that it was more than possible, it was necessary, to be rational about irrationality," set him more on the side of the gray-bearded defenders of the established order than of the anarchic adolescent rebels like Rimbaud and Jarry. And Freud, Gay argues, is a particularly striking case, but not at all a special one: "To be, as Freud was, a thoroughgoing revolutionary and a thoroughgoing bourgeois was by no means a paradox, an anomaly, or even a rarity."

My one reservation about Gay's correction of the popular notion of the modernist enterprise is that his own picture of modernism tends to be a little blurry around the edges. There is a good deal of cogency in the accepted view of a modernist tradition that has its origins in the middle of the 19th century, most plausibly with Baudelaire, that receives a major impetus in the philosophy of Nietzsche, and that in the early years of the 20th century achieves a full sunburst of innovative expression in figures like Freud, Conrad, Joyce, Proust, Rilke, Yeats, Kafka. At times I think Gay makes his refutation of the view of Trilling and others a little too easy by writing as though virtually any important manifestation of artistic or intellectual life in the past 150 years could be called modernist. The essay here on Brahms, for example, though intelligent and informative in itself, tends to weaken the general argument by leading us to wonder what precisely modernism might be if it is to include Brahms. Trilling clearly had no one even remotely like Brahms in mind when he began *Beyond Culture* by speaking of a "bitter line of hostility to civilization" that runs through modernism.

In any case, it might be more helpful to shift the grounds of discussion altogether from the hostility or friendliness of the modernists to civilization—Gay is surely right that one finds both—to the question of the modernists' relation to the heritage of the past, the modernist sense of history. Gay makes some beautiful observations on Freud's fascination with archeology, though he does not generalize from these about the modernist imagination of the past, as he might well have done. One of Hugh Kenner's most suggestive perceptions about modernism in *The Pound Era* is that its preoccupation with actual and literary archeology signals a new relation to the past in which the fragmented physical vestiges of the past interpenetrate the present. Modernism, I would add, evinces this new fascination with the recovery of the immediacy of the archaic past at the same time that it rejects or is estranged from the past as a continuous tradition embodying normative values.

The notion of being cut off from a normative

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

past, a condition which would make modernism a real historical watershed, is the central thesis of the Rumanian scholar, Matei Calinescu, in his useful (if somewhat repetitious) new book, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch.** Modernism, as Calinescu defines it through a careful study of its intellectual antecedents beginning in the Renaissance, represents "a major cultural shift from a time-honored aesthetics of permanence, based on a belief in an unchanging and transcendent ideal of beauty, to an aesthetics of change and novelty." Within this framework, he makes a basic distinction between two opposed ideas of modernity, the bourgeois notion, which is grounded in technology, pragmatic reason, a cult of progress, a concern with measurable time as a commodity, and the artistic notion, which is anarchic and apocalyptic, in conscious rebellion against the bourgeois version of modernity. Though the two modes of modernity may not have always been so distinct from one another as Calinescu proposes, one suspects that Peter Gay at some points in his argument blends the two more than the historical facts will allow. Be that as it may, if the defining condition of modernism is the withering of the authority of the past, it is quite conceivable that certain newly acculturated Jews, severed from their own cultural past but not quite at home with the European past, or "at home" with it perhaps to excess through a self-conscious effort of will, might have been in a specially advantaged position to articulate the radical new intellectual assumptions and aesthetic modes of modernism.

WHAT I think leads to the most debatable consequences in Gay's portrayal of the German-Jewish experience is precisely his tendency to play down the double tension in which so many of these Jews lived, between the lingering, ambiguous claims of their own past, on the one hand, and the "emphatic distance," on the other hand, with which they were generally encountered by Germans. This leads him repeatedly to insist that there was nothing at all distinctively Jewish about the cultural activity of German Jews, and to assume that the much discussed German-Jewish symbiosis was a reality, not an illusion. Both these claims require scrutiny.

Gay's attachment to the idea of symbiosis is particularly perplexing because it runs counter to some of the historical materials he himself discusses so well. This seeming contradiction may be the consequence of a tightrope act of historical imagination he tries to perform. Again and again, setting aside the hindsight of the Holocaust, he sympathetically identifies with the viewpoint of enthusiastically Germanizing Jews in the pre-Nazi era, but in so doing, he comes perilously close to accepting their consciously held view as a valid account of the historical reality in which they were enmeshed. He observes, for example, of the refugees from Nazism:

> For most German Jews, wherever their exile, however much they had undergone, the Jewish-German symbiosis was not a mirage that had finally lifted but a reality that had been wantonly destroyed. They postulated two Germanies, one civilized and the other barbarian; Hitler's seizure of power had placed the latter in control, without therefore defining the former out of existence.

This is, of course, a report of the mentality of the refugees, not necessarily of the author's view, though the larger context reflects considerable readiness on his part to accept their outlook. Indeed, even the terms he chooses in these sentences tend to tip his hand: it is questionable whether "most" German Jews, rather than many of them, responded in this way, though one assumes this must have been the attitude of Gay's own family; the Jews who managed to escape the genocidal attentions of their German hosts are designated exiles, not refugees; and, most surprisingly, Hitler, who was democratically elected by the German people, is said to have seized power. Having identified to this extent with the Jewish devotees of Germanism, Gay can make confident assertions such as the following (it occurs two pages after the passage just quoted) about the experience of Jews in Wilhelminian Germany: "The slights that many German Jews experienced . . . carried far less weight than the German culture in which most of them moved as their element." That is clearly how many Jews of the period, out of an emotional commitment to assimilation, chose to interpret their own condition of wavering distance from the Germans around them, but the strong implication of one of Gay's most instructive essays here, "Hermann Levi: A Study in Service and Self-Hatred," is that such interpretations were ultimately painful exercises in self-delusion.

Hermann Levi was Wagner's Jewish conductor. The characterological ramifications of that startling contradiction are lucidly traced by Gay in his analysis of the German chauvinism, the auto-anti-Semitism, the abject self-abasement which Levi displayed in serving as the indispensable conductor for the rabidly anti-Semitic composer who alternately teased, tormented, and encouraged him. Gay shows, moreover, that such internalization by Jews of the contempt Germans felt for them was a widespread phenomenon. The essay on Levi is accompanied by graphic illustrations from comic pamphlets of the 1880's, written and drawn by Jews and printed by the Jewish house of Eduard Bloch, in which these "German citizens of the Mosaic persuasion" are represented more or less in the same terms of vilification they would be half a century later in the pages of *Der Stürmer*. One illustration, for example, shows a little boy toppling from the highest tier of balconies at the opera, the spectators all around flinging up their arms in dismay, while the child's hook-nosed, coarse-featured father calls after the tumbling

* Indiana University Press, 335 pp, $15.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

figure, "*Jacob, verlier' mir die Uhr nicht!*" (Jacob, don't lose me the watch!). Gay fully recognizes the virulence of such self-hatred, but he is not quite prepared to draw the necessary inferences from it.

THERE obviously must have been marked differences in the individual encounters of different Jews with their German compatriots, depending on their social class, their profession, on whether they lived in a big city or a small town, and on plain luck. Gershom Scholem, for example, in a recent interview, recalls his boyhood in Wilhelminian Berlin with an edge of impatience that has not abated after more than six decades. Scholem's father, the owner of a printshop, was a staunchly loyal German who had shed almost all the vestiges of his ancestral faith, but the child noticed that no Christian German was willing to set foot in their house, and this contradiction made him feel something essentially hollow in his father's German affirmations, impelling him when he reached adolescence to the triple heresy of learning Hebrew, embracing Zionism, and delving into Jewish scholarship.

The perspective Scholem gained through those early choices enables him to see a crucial aspect of the German-Jewish relationship which Gay does not take into account at all: that no matter how decent or considerate individual Germans may have been to individual Jews, the culture as a whole was not prepared to tolerate Jewish existence as a *collective* presence, and precisely for this reason, most German Jews were encouraged to feel at least to some degree that it was wrong for them to imagine self-realization as Jews, indeed, that their real vocation was to transcend mere parochialism and merge into the nobler sphere of *Deutschtum*. The case of Hermann Levi, in other words, is not just an instance of one disturbing trend among German Jews but a paradigmatic illustration of the pathology suffered by German Jews as a group because of the terms of highly conditional acceptance imposed upon them by their Gentile neighbors. This posture of self-abnegation, Scholem shrewdly argues in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, instead of achieving its conscious goal of acceptance, produced the most destructive kind of dialectic relation with Germans:

> Such solutions [of self-surrender] have been offered to Jews again and again, and from various sources. They bespeak a great inner demoralization, an enthusiasm for self-sacrifice which has necessarily remained wholly without meaning for the Jewish community itself, and which no one ever took seriously except the anti-Semites, who found in them an especially nefarious trick of the Jews, an especially conspiratorial note. For it was precisely this desire on the part of the Jews to be absorbed by the Germans that hatred understood as a destructive maneuver against the life of the German people—a thesis repeated indefatigably by the metaphysicians of anti-Semitism between 1830 and 1930.

Peter Gay properly observes that the experience of World War I, with the flood of anti-Semitic feeling released by the conflict even as Jews rallied patriotically to the German cause, came as a profoundly traumatic surprise to many German Jews. "The desperate years between 1914 and 1918 converted German Jews from an easy confidence as German citizens of the Jewish faith to a defiant Zionism, to self-imposed social isolation, and more often, to sheer confusion and disheartened aimlessness." Gay, in the momentum of his sympathetic exposition of cultural symbiosis, would himself appear to regard this turning point as something of a surprise, by no means predictable from the logic of previous relations between Germans and Jews, though his own illustrations of repellent self-hatred from the pages of Eduard Bloch's pamphlets might suggest that the "easy confidence" of those 19th-century German Jews was often more asserted than inwardly possessed.

Gay tends to set aside both Zionism and cosmopolitan socialism as purely peripheral phenomena among German Jews, but perhaps both should be seen instead as authentic reactions to the historical situation which, in opposite ways, responded to its full range of implications more adequately than the century-long Jewish romance with German culture. Certainly Jews from the Germanic sphere played essential roles in the shaping of both Zionism and socialism, and one could argue that it was the spiritual bankruptcy of Emancipation from its earliest phases that provided much of the impetus for both these movements.

IF German Jews, as I have intimated, were caught in a double tension between their frequent rejection by German culture, to which they were drawn, and their intermittent attraction to Jewish antecedents, from which they were in flight, Zionism provided one viable solution to this ultimately intolerable situation by making possible a return to origins without a turning away from modernity. Peter Gay is not in a position to catch the historic resonance of the Zionist solution very well because he has no real understanding of the attraction—however ambiguous it may have been—exerted by Jewish antecedents. His lack of perception on this fundamental issue is mainly what compels him to a denial that there were any detectably Jewish elements in the cultural activity of German Jews.

Now, this denial is to a degree commendable because it exposes the facile imprecision with which certain stereotypes have been applied to Jews both by philo-Semitic sentimentalism and by anti-Semitic hostility. According to the prejudices of both, the Jew is characterized by qualities of nervous cleverness, aggressive intellectuality, daring iconoclasm, which make him the ideal avant-gardist or the perfect cultural subversive, depending on one's point of view. Against such notions, Gay helpfully

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

points out that the great swarm of Jewish thinkers, artists, and writers in the Germanic sphere had its healthy share of old-fashioned bourgeois conservatives, and that German Jewry as a whole was by no means predominantly intellectual, and even included appreciable numbers of that rarely mentioned species, the stupid Jew. Insisting in this way on the broad variety of German-Jewish cultural stances, Gay argues vigorously against those who are constantly disposed to finding an essential component of Jewishness in any creative figure of Jewish extraction: "Just as there was no Jewish way to cut furs," he sums up his account of the elusiveness of the Berlin-Jewish spirit, "there was no Jewish way to paint portraits, play Beethoven, produce Ibsen, or fence in the Olympics."

The point is well-taken as a debunking of the intellectual mystique of Jewishness, but in the final analysis, it is also a little too simple. As George L. Mosse, the distinguished historian of modern Germany, has aptly noted in a *New Republic* review of the Gay volume: "The problem of what remained Jewish about such Jews cannot be answered by attacking the myth of their alienation or avant-garde leadership. It turns out to be more complicated than that." Perhaps the principal complication is that in very many instances, German Jews, even without being champions of alienation, made the culture they did out of the psychological squirm of their ambiguous location between two worlds, and this meant that what they made often did exhibit certain differences, for better or for worse, from the work of their Gentile counterparts.

No one has expressed the negative side of this difference more ruthlessly, more brilliantly, than Franz Kafka, commenting in a 1921 letter to Max Brod on the Jewish wit of the Viennese satirist, Karl Kraus. (Though Gay does not include Prague in the sectors of German-speaking Jewry he means to consider, it is astonishing and symptomatic that there is not so much as a single passing reference to Kafka in his book.) "Most young Jews who began to write German," Kafka observes,

> wanted to leave Jewishness behind them, and their fathers approved of this, but vaguely (this vagueness was what was outrageous to them). But with their posterior legs they were still glued to their fathers' Jewishness and with their waving anterior legs they found no new ground. The ensuing despair became their inspiration.*

With the sharpness of immediate experience, Kafka perfectly catches the crucial element that is blurred in Peter Gay's account of German Jewry —the acute pain of contradiction of those caught between two cultures, the emotional destructiveness of the double message imparted by the fathers to the sons. Kafka goes on to argue that the literature generated out of this psychological predicament had certain sad peculiarities:

> First of all, the product of their despair could not be German literature, though outwardly it seemed to be so. They existed among three impossibilities . . .: the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing German, the impossibility of writing differently.

GAY's discussion of Freud in his lead essay strikingly illustrates how he simply does not take into consideration the whole vexed phenomenon of dual identity that Kafka describes. The essay in itself is one of the finest pieces of writing in the book. It vividly evokes Freud's home and office, his Viennese surroundings, the general tenor of his daring enterprise, and by firmly showing Freud's connections with German culture at large and with European science, it explodes still another myth: that psychoanalysis was somehow the product of a particularly Viennese spirit.

All this is admirable, and Gay is probably right in not deigning to mention the dubious interpreters of Freud's Jewishness who have derived all of his thought from the Kabbalah, on the one hand, or from his hostility to Christian society as a supposed *shtetl* Jew, on the other. Nevertheless, it is more than a little peculiar that in a sixty-page essay on Freud in a book entitled *Freud, Jews and Other Germans*, Gay should see fit to mention Freud's Jewishness only in two brief paragraphs on Viennese anti-Semitism. I am not proposing that there has to be a "Jewish key" to Freud's originality, but there is a good deal of evidence in his letters as well as in his professional writing from *The Interpretation of Dreams* to *Moses and Monotheism* that he repeatedly experienced that psychological squirm of ambiguous cultural location to which I have referred and that, early and late, he was working out strategies to overcome or compensate for the discomfort he felt. This important aspect of Freud's life and thought has been carefully documented and judiciously analyzed by the French critic and scholar, Marthe Robert, in *From Oedipus to Moses: Freud's Jewish Identity*,† and Peter Gay's suggestive but incomplete account (which shows no awareness of Marthe Robert's book) might usefully be complemented by her intelligent study.

In Freud's case, the two-sided discomfort of an acculturated Jew in the German-speaking world led, as Marthe Robert nicely shows, to an early fascination with Rome as the archetypal symbol of Christian Europe, to an odd identification with Hannibal, the Semite who aspired to be the conqueror of Rome, and ultimately to a personal absorption in the scholarly fiction of Moses as a Gentile leader of the Jewish people who is destroyed

*Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston, Schocken, 509 pp., $24.50.

† Translated by Ralph Mannheim (the original French version appeared in 1974), Doubleday/Anchor Books, 229 pp., $2.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by his own recalcitrant followers. For other Jewish shapers of culture in the Germanic sphere, the contradictions of their situation generated not only the "sad peculiarities" of marginal men and women seeking to transcend their marginality, like Freud, by an assertion of imaginative will, but also a tendency to draw on their Jewish origins as intellectual resources. Precisely in this connection, it is instructive to note that in many signal instances the interest in the values, symbols, and organizing categories of classical Jewish experience was accompanied by some degree of personal involvement, or at least curiosity about involvement, in Zionism.

Thus, if one considers the Jews writing in German who came of age toward the end of the 19th century through the first two decades of our own century, the greatest writer of prose fiction is clearly Kafka, the most original literary critic, Walter Benjamin, the major historian, Scholem, the finest poet, Else Lasker-Schüler. Scholem is a convinced Zionist who chose to emigrate to Palestine in early manhood and who has dedicated his life to Jewish scholarship, though continuing to write much of his work originally in German. His friend Walter Benjamin long entertained the fantasy of following Scholem to Jerusalem, learning Hebrew, and becoming a kind of latter-day exegete, and his readings in Jewish mysticism and theology exerted a certain oblique but substantive influence on his thinking even in his adherence—always an idiosyncratic one—to Marxism.* Else Lasker-Schüler took refuge from Nazism in Palestine toward the end of her life, although she did not do so out of Zionist conviction. But there was a congruence between her verse and her final residence in Jerusalem, for the Judean landscape, filtered through Luther's translation of the Bible, had figured importantly in her poetry, and in 1913, when she was a prominent figure among German Expressionists, she made the pointed decision to call a collection of poems on biblical motifs, *Hebräische Balladen*. Finally, Kafka was an avid Zionist through much of his adult life, dreaming of the idea of emigration to Palestine but imagining that the act of Zionist fulfillment was a spiritual impossibility for him just like marrying and having children. As he lay in a sanitarium the year before his death, he was arduously making his way with his newly acquired Hebrew through Yosef Haim Brenner's despairing novel, *Breakdown and Bereavement*. It is a haunting emblematic scene: the supreme genius of prose fiction that emerged from German-speaking Jewry turning in his last months—quite without hope of consolation—from the "impossible" native language he had made his own crystalline medium to the language of national origins long forgotten by his father and his father's father.

PETER GAY, as I have said, does not even glance at Kafka, nor does he make any passing reference to Scholem, while Benjamin is mentioned only once, briefly, as part of a list of Jewish intellectuals who committed suicide during the Hitler era. Gay devotes several pages, however, to the career of Else Lasker-Schüler, and precisely because he addresses himself chiefly to the question of whether to classify her as a Jewish poet, the case of Else Lasker-Schüler provides an apt concluding example of the problems involved in defining the German or Jewish character of German-Jewish writers and artists.

Gay quotes the famous remark Else Lasker-Schüler made to a friend in Jerusalem in the early 40's in refusing to allow her poems to be translated into Hebrew: *"Aber sie sind doch hebräisch geschrieben"* (But they *are* written in Hebrew). (In 1968 a selection of her poems at last was beautifully translated into Hebrew by the leading Israeli poet, Yehuda Amichai.) Peculiarly, Gay interprets this statement simply as an expression of the poet's "monumental . . . pride in German," though it surely also suggests that she thought of her poetry as German but somehow not Germanic, that she felt she was imaginatively in touch with a kind of primordial Hebraic vision. Her own tendency to mystification on this subject encouraged many of her German contemporaries as well as some later commentators to adopt a mystique of Else Lasker-Schüler as *die jüdische Dichterin* who cast an exotic spell of "Oriental" magic in her verse, and Gay is quite right to object to the foolishness of such views, pointing out that there is very little of the real Orient but a good deal of European Romanticism in her images and her sense of poetic structure. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Gay obliterates self-evident and necessary distinctions when he asserts, "What Else Lasker-Schüler was doing when she leafed through her Old Testament was precisely what Gottfried Benn was doing when he recorded his visits to the morgue." Else Lasker-Schüler's relation to her biblical materials, as her *Hebräische Balladen* abundantly illustrates, was not merely a technical one of finding, like Benn at the morgue, a source of unsentimental poetic diction. She turned to the Bible at least partly because she felt she had some special connection as a Jew with the Bible.

Gay recognizes that at various times, or often simultaneously, Else Lasker-Schüler evinced a passionate identification both with her Jewish origins and with the German culture in which she grew up, but it is characteristic of his general outlook that he should be roundly affirmative about the German allegiance and oddly concessive about the Jewish one. "Firmly, eloquently Jewish as she was, her Jewishness was drenched in poetry; it was wholly personal, profoundly unorthodox." But how else should any modern poet be Jewish, or, for that matter, German or French or American? The iconoclastic use of biblical materials, the imaginative flirtation with the figure of Jesus, which

*I have argued this view at length in these pages in "On Walter Benjamin," September 1969.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gay goes on to cite as evidence of a "not unproblematic" lack of orthodoxy in Else Lasker-Schüler are in fact commonplace features in the work of Yiddish and Hebrew poets whose Jewishness is usually taken for granted. The point is that modernism in general, as Matei Calinescu observes, represents a break with the normative force of the past, and it is therefore predictable that a Jewish modernist in any language, medium, or cultural setting, will exercise an unprecedented degree of freedom with the materials he or she has inherited from the Jewish past. There is no longer any other way to express Jewishness in art.

Keeping in mind this general aspect of the modern cultural condition, we may be less inclined to view Else Lasker-Schüler's decision to stress a highly personal "Hebraic" element in her work as an incidental quirk in the career of a German poet, and more prepared to see in that choice a partial but real realignment of identities, reflecting a shift in awareness of historical realities. "There are three intertwined and overlapping ways," Gay writes, "for a poet to be Jewish—or for that matter, anything else: by choice of audience, choice of language, or choice of subject matter," and he finds Else Lasker-Schüler ultimately German in all three categories. But the clarity of all this is a little specious, for what it omits is the elusive but essential consideration of outlook, values, tonalities, and cultural references in a poet's work. Else Lasker-Schüler was imbued with German literary ideals, and the famous symbiosis had clearly not broken down for her, but she felt the necessity to introduce into it a dialectical moment of forthright particularism that would not have occurred to her 19th-century predecessors who set out on the adventure of assimilation.

THE special resonance of this German turning to the classical Hebrew past can be illustrated by juxtaposing "The Shulamite," a 1913 poem of mystical desire by Else Lasker-Schüler with "The Lonely Say," an analogous mystical poem written just two years later in Vienna by the Hebrew poet, Avraham Ben Yitzhak Sonne. Formally, both poems reflect trends of post-Symbolist German verse, while the expressed yearning—solemn for Sonne, sensual for Else Lasker-Schüler—to pass out of this life into an ultimate state of unending oneness, probably has its roots in German Romanticism. Yet both poets articulate their vision with biblical images, work with the potent memory of specific biblical texts, and there may be an advantage in comparing the poems in translation (both English versions are mine), for the comparison reveals a kind of cultural substratum shared by the two poets beneath the pronounced differences of their linguistic surfaces. In the case of the Sonne poem, which is written in a predominantly biblical Hebrew, there is a phrase-by-phrase adherence to a particular biblical source —the great evocation at the beginning of Psalm 19 of the heavens' speechless praise of God, day and night:

Day unto day will bequeath a guttering sun
and night over night will lament
summer after summer gone into leaf-fall
the world in its sorrow exults.

Tomorrow we die reft of speech
as we leave we stand at the closing gate
and the heart God gladdened with nearness
will regret—and tremble for fear of betrayal.

Day unto day will bear a burning sun
and night after night will spill stars
on the lips of the lonely, song stops:
by seven ways we part and by one we return.

It is a poem surely conditioned by German influences, but it is also a strong reshaping, done with the freedom of a true modernist, of the Psalmist's vision, and as such an authentic lyric masterpiece of the modern Hebrew revival. "The Shulamite," by contrast, does not have the same textural closeness to its biblical source, though the poem's informing sensibility is kindled by the erotic poetry of the Song of Songs, which is fused in the poet's mind with the mystical-allegorical interpretation that religious tradition has given to the Song of Songs. Perhaps the heritage of Hölderlin is also detectable here, but the German poet has manifestly chosen for the moment to flaunt another heritage, has projected herself, with a terrific energy of imagination, out of her native sphere, into a landscape of ancestral remembrance:

O, from your sweet mouth I have come
to know beatitude so well!
Already I feel the lips of Gabriel
burning on my breast . . .
And the night-clouds drink
my deep dream of cedars.
O, how your life beckons me!
And I vanish
with flowering heartache,
I flow away into space,
into time,
to forever,
and my soul burns away in the evening colors
of Jerusalem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Does Performance Matter?

Samuel Lipman

It is a commonplace idea that performance is of great importance in the communication of serious music. In a sense, it is easy to see why this should be so; for most people, music can only be heard when it is performed. But the value attributed nowadays to performance goes beyond this practical consideration. Indeed, there can be little doubt that we live in a musical age which exalts the performer, renders him fame and fortune far in excess of what is granted to living composers, and even confers upon a lucky few a measure of immortality through the medium of recording.

As a pianist, I have spent much of my own musical life in an atmosphere carefully structured to produce active believers in this cult of performance. I was trained mostly by Russian teachers, ending with three years of lessons from the queen of Juilliard piano teachers, Rosina Lhevinne, who died in 1976 at the age of ninety-six. From her and from my previous teachers I received a rigorously strict education in the way the piano was played in Russia even before the turn of the century; viewers of the recent films on the Kirov ballet school and on Russian gymnasts will have some idea of what this training was like in spirit even if not in specific content.

More was involved than simply learning how to master the piano mechanically. What to do with every piece—which of the innumerable technical and musical options to employ—was a matter of equal importance. How seriously such details were taken for their effect on the final result may be seen from a tense exchange I had with Mme. Lhevinne during one of my lessons in the early 1960's. I was playing for her the *Emperor* Concerto of Beethoven, a work which I was to perform the following week with a minor orchestra in California. As I started to play the opening cadenza, she immediately objected that I was using the damper pedal—the mechanism on the piano, operated with the right foot, which sustains the sounds after the fingers have released the keys—much too much. When I demurred, she said: "But last night you went to hear Richter: didn't you hear how *he* used the pedal?" When I answered that the famous Soviet pianist's pedaling was the one aspect of his playing I disliked, Mme. Lhevinne softly answered, after a pregnant and hostile pause: "I only wish for you the same success."

Every detail, then, was of major importance to the performance as a whole. I myself accepted this general proposition in evaluating both my own work and the work of others. And so, it seemed, did everyone else. Thus, whenever I went before the public I found, as does every performer, that I was critically judged in terms of how well I had satisfied the finely detailed standards of each reviewer, standards which were based upon the most careful discrimination of difference. The problem was that these differences themselves differed very widely from reviewer to reviewer.

There was one school of performance which tried to solve the problem of difference with a single intellectual stroke. This was the school of historical authenticity, preeminently associated among pianists with the name of Artur Schnabel. To Schnabel and his followers, the right way to perform a piece of music was not the way decided by the performer (or by his teachers!); the right way—and the only way—had been decided by the composer in the very process of writing his piece. For proponents of this position, there was no longer any discussion of Rubinstein's tone versus Horowitz's, of Hofmann's staccato versus Rosenthal's, or even Rachmaninoff's Chopin versus Cortot's. For these fundamentalists, the question was not how an artist expressed himself through his own interpretation, but whether he expressed the music through fidelity to the composer's intention.

In practical terms, this meant playing fully, no more and no less, what was notated in the best possible edition of the music, and the subordination of the performer to the music. Yet even this attitude of fidelity to the text (called *text-treue* in German) turned out to be only another means of identifying differences and assigning importance to them. That these differences were seen as involving authenticity rather than virtuosity and self-expression hardly meant that they no longer counted: indeed, from this point of view, the music depended even more heavily on performance (the "right" performance) than ever before.

For a long time now I have been nagged by doubts about the cult of performance, but it is only since I began listening to many more performances than I once had occasion to do, and to listen to them, as a critic, in quite a new way, that these doubts have begun to crystallize. Recently, for example, in preparation for an article on Wagner's *Ring*,[1] I listened with score at

Samuel Lipman, *a concert pianist, is* Commentary's *regular music critic. His recent contributions include articles on Mahler ("The Mahler Everyone Loves," November 1977), Yehudi Menuhin ("Portrait of a Prodigy," July 1977), and Vladimir Horowitz ("King of Pianists," May 1977).*

1 "Performing the *Ring*," Commentary, January 1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

least once to nine different complete performances of the entire cycle—approximately 135 hours of music—as well as to most of the recorded performances of one or another part. As I listened, the music remained beautiful, but to my surprise the specific performances seemed to count less. Except for some miserable singing on one set of recordings, and the intrusion of English on another, all the versions were more than adequate to allow for the deepest musical pleasure; but beyond that, the highly talented individuals involved tended to become increasingly vague in my mind as compared with the power of the music itself. The differences in performance—here faster, there slower; here louder, there softer; here a singer with a better voice, there a singer with a more passionate characterization—were essentially nugatory.

It was the same with recording quality and technique. The relative range of quality in those recordings was wide, an understandable product of their varied ages and the original purpose for which they were made. But a very few minutes of listening to each recording was enough to accustom me to its technological level. Here as elsewhere, as my catalogue of differences lengthened, my assessment of their importance became weaker. The music still came through, and the music was what mattered the most.

But this was opera. What about other kinds of music? Would the same conclusion emerge from a similarly concentrated exposure to many different performances of, say, symphonic works? In an effort to answer the question, I chose for consideration perhaps the most widely played instrumental music—and some of the most beautiful and influential as well—ever written: the nine Beethoven symphonies.

The current Schwann catalogues list 18 versions of the complete set; more are available in better record stores from European companies which have not chosen to have them widely distributed here, and still others have been made and are now discontinued, awaiting repackaging and reissuing at lower prices. In addition to all this, there are countless recordings of individual symphonies by every major conductor and many others little known or even ignored.

Out of this embarrassment of riches I have listened to ten complete sets: one each by (in alphabetical order) Ernest Ansermet, Bernard Haitink, Otto Klemperer, Erich Leinsdorf, Willem Mengelberg, George Szell, Arturo Toscanini, and Bruno Walter—and two by Herbert von Karajan.[2] I have also listened to individual symphonies performed, sometimes more than once, by Pierre Boulez, Colin Davis, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Jascha Horenstein, Karajan, Erich Kleiber, Klemperer, Pierre Monteux, Arthur Nikisch, Fritz Reiner, Victor De Sabata, Hermann Scherchen, Leopold Stokowski, Toscanini, Walter, and Felix Weingartner.

All these recordings are well known, and some of them are famous. They have been exhaustively and repeatedly described by highly competent critics both in contemporary reviews and later in fully annotated articles and discographies. Though there is always some, and occasionally a great deal of, disagreement among these evaluations, a consensus about each conductor's work tends to emerge with which it would be difficult to quarrel. Toscanini's records are fast, bright, tense, and often exciting; Mengelberg's are wayward, arbitrary, distorted, and provocative; Klemperer's are serious, humorless, heavy, and "profound"; Szell is vital, interesting, somewhat plain, and concerned with getting the best possible playing from his orchestra; Karajan is brilliant, a bit slick, and strangely moving in his icy control. And so it goes.

Among the performances of single symphonies, Boulez[3] in the Fifth sounds remarkably uncommitted either to the music or to the tradition which has grown around it; Furtwängler[4] unconsciously tears the music apart and therefore sometimes achieves effects of the utmost plasticity; Scherchen[5] takes some unusually fast tempi in the *Eroica;* Weingartner[6] offers a curious combination of unmannered conceptions with lush orchestral executions. And so on.

The differences, then, are certainly there in the large. And they are also present in detail, as I discovered by selecting two passages—one in the First Symphony and the other in the Seventh—which pose two distinct kinds of problems in performance: one in the conductor's fidelity to the text, and the other in the level of orchestral playing which he is able to elicit.

The passage in the First Symphony is the second theme of the first movement. Here the problem for the conductor is to find a tempo which will both accommodate the tranquil opening of the theme and its weightier and more outspoken continuation, and at the same time not be so different from the pace of the rather skittish first theme as to lose the possibility of overall integration.

Of the recordings I have listened to of this section—14 in all—the greatest contrast is between Mengelberg and Leinsdorf. Mengelberg, though he does not take a slower tempo to begin the second theme, adds a *ritenuto*—an immediate slowing down—to the bars introducing the weightier music that follows. Not content with that slackening, he concludes the phrase with an enormous *ritardando*—a

---

2 Ansermet: London STS-BTH-S-1; Haitink: Philips 6747307; Klemperer: Angel SH-3619; Leinsdorf: RCA VCS-6903; Mengelberg: Philips 6767003; Szell: Columbia M7X-30281; Toscanini: RCA VIC-8000; Walter: Odyssey Y7-30051. The earlier of the two Karajan recordings is listed as Deutsche Grammophon 2721001, and his just released newer set is Deutsche Grammophon 2740172.

3 Columbia M-30085

4 Many Furtwängler performances of Beethoven symphonies may presently be purchased on both commercial and private recordings. In this country, Seraphim has released the Third (*Eroica*), Fifth, and Seventh Symphonies in album 1C-6018; the Ninth is available, also from Seraphim, in album 1B-6068. Still freer performances are irregularly available from Olympic Records in this country, and on the Deutsche Grammophon and Unicorn labels abroad.

5 Westminster WG-8352.

6 The Eighth and Ninth Symphonies are sold in this country on Turnabout THS 65076/77; the Third is currently available only in Germany, on Electrola 1C 053-01 481.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gradual slowing—on the *fortissimo* chords which introduce the return to either the semi-obligatory repeat or, after the repeat has been played, to the development section of the movement. But Leinsdorf, possibly the most textually observant of the conductors I heard here, will have none of this alteration of tempo. Since the score indicates no change in this particular section, Leinsdorf plays it in the very fast *Allegro con brio* tempo which Beethoven prescribes for the main body of the movement.

Of the other conductors, both Klemperer and Haitink are as rigid as Leinsdorf, but in a slower overall tempo. Haitink goes along at a middle-of-the-road pace while Klemperer chooses a tempo so slow as to give a ponderous and dour impression. Szell, Monteux,[7] and the two Toscanini versions[8] are, in ascending order, slightly more flexible rhythmically, though always within a strict classical framework. Karajan in both his later recordings shows a greater willingness to take liberties, but these are pale compared to Mengelberg's. Walter and Furtwängler, though they bear some resemblance to Mengelberg in their perception of the demands of the music, are carefully discreet in their deviations from a single tempo.

Do these differences in performance make any difference to the experience of listening to the music? I cannot see that they do to any significant extent. Even Mengelberg, though his recordings are currently the subject of attacks in the musical press for what is considered their interpretative license, hardly seems to be doing more than underlining what Beethoven wrote.

The opening of the last movement of the Seventh Symphony presents difficulties not so much of musical interpretation as of execution. Chief among these at the start are the articulation of winds and brasses in the repeated notes and the clarity of the first violins in several short scalic patterns. Coming slightly later are the fast dotted rhythms for the strings and the rapid two-note phrases in the first violins. In both passages, not only clarity but good tone is the goal.

Of the 15 versions I listened to, the Cleveland Orchestra under Szell undoubtedly surmounts the problems of these passages better than any other group; the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Ansermet is the poorest performer. Both in clarity and tone quality alike, all the other orchestras—including such legendary groups as the Boston Symphony (Leinsdorf), the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam (Mengelberg), the 1937 New York Philharmonic (Toscanini),[9] the NBC Symphony (Toscanini), and the Berlin (Karajan) and Vienna (Furtwängler and Karajan) Philharmonics—fall in between.

Nevertheless, despite these perceptible differences, all in all the better performances are only marginally clearer, cleaner, and of more pleasing sound than the lesser efforts. And in any case, no orchestra, including the Cleveland, plays the passage perfectly, and no orchestra, including the Suisse Romande, plays it so badly as to interfere to any serious degree with the music. All the performances I heard adequately communicate the structure of the music and its emotional power.

Of course it may be that this is so only because the average level of artistic achievement on these records is very high. Yet there are grounds for thinking that even differences vastly greater than those which are present in these Beethoven recordings matter only marginally. Two kinds of evidence, admittedly speculative, may be adduced here. The first concerns what may be reasonably suspected about the early performances of what we now accept as the great masterworks, and the second involves the curious phenomenon of transcriptions.

Anyone who has had anything to do with the performance of new music knows just how tacky most of these renditions actually are, and how approximate is the fulfillment of the composer's notes and performance directions. I wish I could say that I am talking here only about subtle matters, but in fact veterans of such performances know in their hearts that survival often must replace fidelity as a goal in this kind of work. While modern music is indeed hard to perform, there is no reason to suppose that it is harder for us than the new music of the 19th century was for the performers who first had to play it. Certainly composers, then as now, complained bitterly about the performances they were accorded. It would therefore seem likely that such works as the Beethoven symphonies were themselves mangled on the concert stage early in their lives, subject as they must have been to lassitude, perversion, and simple incompetence. And yet the masterpieces established themselves—to the point that present-day performers are often accused of *lèse majesté* if they fail to play them to the highest possible standards.

The scandal about transcriptions has now mostly died down, not because they have been accepted but rather because they have been driven out of existence in polite society. So completely have they vanished from orchestra programs and the repertories of refined instrumentalists, that it is easy to forget how much the most famous music in the Western tradition owes to its being thus retailed. In the 19th century, in the absence of recordings and of today's many concerts, orchestral and chamber compositions were circulated in transcription designed for amateur four-hand piano performance in the home. Professional soloists also made a practice of playing transcriptions of operatic and even orchestral excerpts. All this helped to keep the music alive. In more recent times, Bach's popularity owes much to the inflated and often bombastic transcriptions made by and for Leopold Stokowski and other famous conductors of modern orchestras. (Something of this practice continues to exist, though outside the world of serious music: electronic, "synthesized" performances of both Bach and Debussy have become best-sellers in the pop market.) In

[7] London STS-15238.

[8] The earlier Toscanini version is Seraphim 1C-6015; the later performance is that of the complete set listed above.

[9] RCA VIC-1502.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

short, the music has survived, and indeed prevailed over, even the most vulgar distortions of performance.

Another example of the power of great music to survive inadequate performance may be seen in the remarkable recording of the Beethoven Fifth made by Arthur Nikisch[10] with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1913. In this performance, because of the inability of the primitive acoustic recording process to capture sufficient sound from the strings, brass and wind instruments were used to add volume. Yet what emerges from the record is the symphony itself. It is not the work played by an orchestra in a live concert, not a modern recording, but it is, simply and powerfully, the very core of what Beethoven created.

No one, surely, would argue for the positive virtue of stone-age recording processes or incompetent performances. But recording techniques have long since ceased to be a problem, and even competence is becoming less and less of an issue. There was a time when a performer could either get through a piece—playing as many of the notes as correctly as possible, as audibly as possible, and as musically as possible—or he could not. Records have changed all that. Since the late 1940's, magnetic tape has enabled each note, if necessary, to be recorded separately and then, thanks to the miracle of inaudible splices, assembled into a "whole" performance. When this convenience is added to the electronic manipulation of sound level, tone color, and room ambience, the very possibility of incompetence in the old sense disappears. The weak sound strong, the old young, the dull bright, and the sloppy precise.

Thus, on records, technically excellent performances have become as routine as they are—and always have been—rare in the concert hall. Perhaps it is this above all which has made performance, in spite of its present position in musical life, seem so much less consequential than once upon a time it did.

[10] Electrola 1C 053-01 466.

Fiction

A Novelist Under Communism

Pearl K. Bell

No matter how often and graphically we are told of the physical and psychological pressures that afflict the writers of Eastern Europe, it remains difficult for us to understand fully and concretely how the policing of the imagination and all its works affects the life of such a writer. We recognize how trying it must be for him to write his books or poems under the menacing shadow of a totalitarian state that trains its unsleeping vigilance on his words. We know that Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuri Daniel, because they "conspired" to have their books published abroad, spent years in concentration camps for this crime, and we are told that such Czech writers as the playwright Václav Havel and the novelists Ludvík Vaculík and Milan Kundera have been censored and imprisoned not only for signing the civil-rights appeal in Charter 77 but, long before that document was drawn up, for the sins of ridiculing or realistically depicting in their plays and novels the bureaucratic corruption and dreariness of life in a socialist utopia. We shudder to think of the physical hardship Sinyavsky resigned himself to during his seven-year incarceration, and marvel that he scarcely mentions this hardship in his recent book, *A Voice from the Chorus,* which is drawn from the letters he was allowed to send his wife twice a month.

What is much harder to comprehend is the tremendous importance that the governments of the Communist world attach to a writer's words. In the Anglo-Saxon countries today, the spheres of literature and public power converge only in the sense that the government supports many writers and universities with its grants, but this money does not give the state any kind of control over the work these writers produce. Words are so cheap and plentiful in the West today, so easily disposed of and much of the time so meaningless, that it becomes impossible to take them seriously, even in most of our literature. Words slip through the mind like water, part of the unmediated din that accompanies our waking life. But in Russia, as Sinyavsky has written, there still exists

> . . . the belief in the power of words. Everyone shares this belief. . . . That is why people write, and why they are forbidden to write. That is why others are silent and why the authorities put people in prison. . . . To us, words are still too alive, too passionate, too solid and active in their internal secretions to treat them coolly, as people do in the West—where words are spoken and written, it seems, without any particular hindrance, but also without any great passion on the part of the speaker or writer. . . . [People in the West] cannot understand why it is necessary to destroy someone for writing words, nor why the larger, official body of writers, that vast literary army, cannot utter a word without looking around to make sure that it agrees with the intentions and permitted phraseology of higher authority. Nor why from time to time something goes wrong in the ranks of that army, and someone dashes out and starts shouting as furiously as though he thought he were about to turn the world upside down.

To a Communist regime, a writer

Pearl K. Bell *reviews fiction regularly in these pages.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whose work is ironic and ambiguous—forbidden fruit in the Eden of socialist realism—is threatening because he messes up the official categories. As Nadezhda Mandelstam wrote in *Hope Against Hope*: "It seems inevitable that a poet should arouse enmity. . . . Every poet is a 'disturber of sense'—that is, instead of repeating the ready-made opinions current in his time, he extracts new sense from his own understanding of the world." When Akhmatova was expelled from the writers' union in 1946, and her work banned from the Soviet press, Stalin's hatchet-man in Leningrad began his vilification of her poetry with an interesting accusation: "Akhmatova's subject matter is utterly individualistic."

Nevertheless, as we know from the history of Eastern Europe since the war, there were times when the iron control of culture by the Russian and satellite governments relaxed long enough for original unorthodox writing, previously inconceivable, to be published and even to flourish. Such a change in the monochromatic picture occurred in Russia after Stalin's death, when some of the grim realities of Soviet life could be revealed in novels whose authors would have been massacred in Stalin's lifetime for whispering such things in their sleep. In Ilya Ehrenburg's novel, *Thaw*, that artful dodger dared to dispute the official version of the Moscow Trials and to speak of official anti-Semitism. After Khrushchev's famous speech in 1956 there was an even greater eruption of "oppositional" literature, and though none of the books went unchallenged and undefiled by the old guard, it was still possible in 1961 for the Slavic scholar Max Hayward to write that in the eight years after Stalin's death, "though ultimate party control of literature and the arts has never been abandoned (and could of course at any moment be restored in all its vigor), it has nevertheless been exercised, on the whole, with restraint and intelligence. . . ." How thoroughly that control could be restored Hayward has disclosed in later accounts of renewed persecution, most recently in his fine introduction to *A Voice from the Chorus*. In Czechoslovakia there was a tremendous surge of creative independence in the four years that culminated in the so-called Prague Spring of 1968—brought to an end, like other flares of heresy in Eastern Europe, by Russian tanks and troops.

In short, the degree of *partiinost*—the stern control of literature by the party—has not been consistent in the Communist world during the past twenty-five years. There has been a curious process of relaxing, testing the waters, then the harsh return to repression. Clearly the regimes are uneasy, and in their fear of the power of the word, they shuttle between the light and the dark.

AT THE moment, the astonishingly outspoken work of the forty-four-year-old novelist George Konrád would seem to indicate that Hungary is the most liberal country in Eastern Europe, though perhaps "least repressive" is closer to the truth. His brilliant first novel, *The Case Worker* (1974), dealt with unalleviated human wretchedness and poverty, which theoretically have been eliminated from the brave new world. In his new novel, *The City Builder*,* Konrád openly declares his contempt and loathing for the airless, depressing climate of regimentation created by socialism, and skewers the Marxist cant that fails to hide its history of empty promises and mindless subservience.

Yet not only have Konrád's uncompromising novels been printed in Hungary, but he is also a member of the writers' union and is allowed to travel in the West. And he is not a Communist. That such huge concessions are being made in Hungary today is especially astonishing when one remembers that two decades ago, after the Hungarian uprising, that country shot its Communist leader, Imre Nagy, and imprisoned the Communist novelist Tibor Déry.

But if some things change, others remain the same—in kind, if not in degree. The censors deleted some ideologically offensive passages from *The City Builder* before it was published in Budapest. Moreover, Konrád, who is a sociologist as well as a novelist, was arrested in 1974, after the government got wind of a book he was writing, with another sociologist who has since emigrated to Australia, about intellectuals in the East and in the West. He was released a week later. But who is to say that his apparent immunity is permanent? Obviously the situation of a writer in any society whose citizens can act only by consent of the state is ambiguous and unpredictable. However widely the limits to dissent may be set, they are always there.

This intractable fact may in part account for the extreme dissimilarity of Konrád's two novels. For *The Case Worker* is without overt political intent, and *The City Builder* throbs with political intensity. At the heart of the earlier book is a nameless government official, the supervisor of a child-welfare agency in Budapest, who tells the story in the grim diary of his working days. His job, as he sees it, is to regulate "the traffic of suffering"—the endless stream of children who are retarded, hopelessly defective, neglected, abandoned, mistreated; of parents so desperately unable to cope with the fragments of their decaying lives that they go mad or commit suicide.

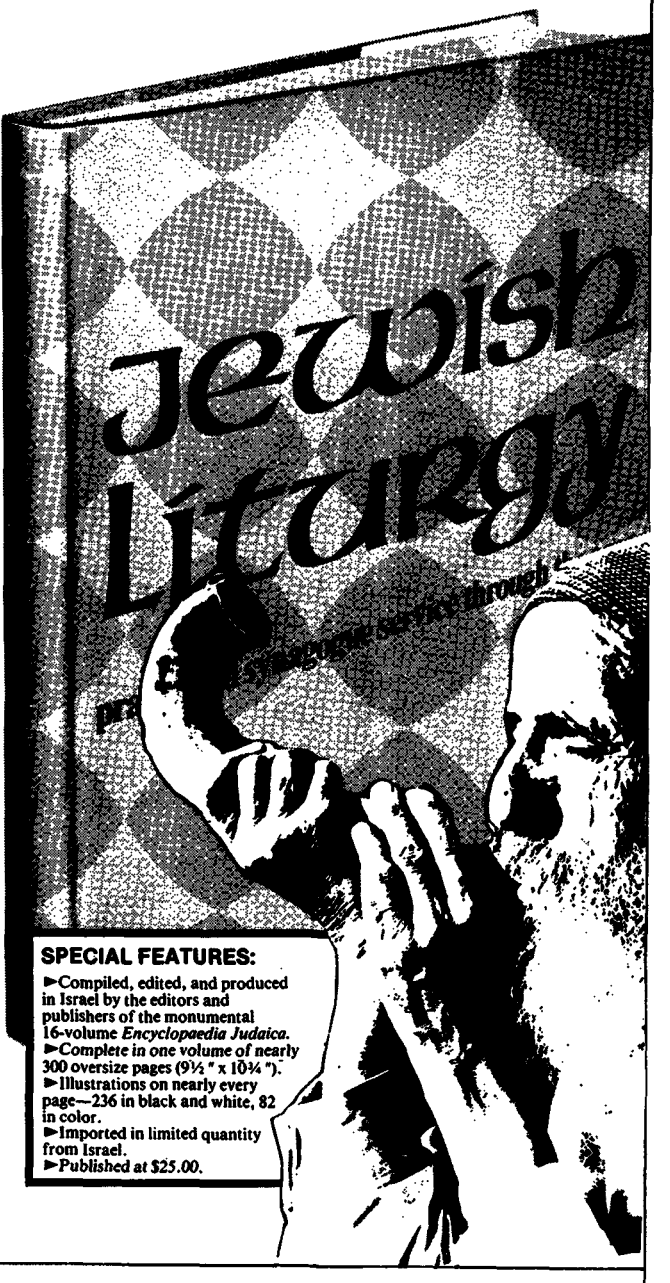
The social worker clutches his protective mask of aloof dispassion, but he is finally torn apart by the irreconcilable moralities of expediency and helpless pity. When the parents of a five-year-old idiot kill themselves, he strips away his professional pose of neutrality. Abandoning his normal life, he moves into the malodorous flat to care for the repellent, defenseless child: "I would wipe the enigmatic expression of omniscient official superiority off my face, I would cease to record incurable woes in magic formulas devoid of meaning, I would stop reprimanding people for weaknesses that I myself share." Konrád's bleak and anguished vision of human need entangled in an impotent web of compassion derives its transcendent power not from its tacit political implication—that suffering and poverty exist in Communist society—but from

* Translated by Ivan Sanders, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 184 pp., $7.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Jewish Book Club Invites You to Celebrate Being Jewish

Everything you've ever wanted to know about the ceremonies, rituals, prayers, and observances of the Jewish people as handed down from generation to generation through four millennia and across five continents—now complete in one monumental volume.



YOURS FREE!

WITH MEMBERSHIP IN THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB
PUBLISHER'S LIST PRICE—$25.00

The entire ritual legacy of Judaism is at your fingertips in this sumptuous book. You'll find detailed instructions on how each act of worship is performed in the synagogue as well as in the home. And you'll discover the full historical background to what Jews do and why they do it. Everything you want your children to know is here:

- The prayers (all of them)...how the totality of the Jewish experience is distilled in their words and music...and how the Jewish people have woven them into a four-thousand-year-old conversation with God.
- The entire order of service in the synagogue and how to explain everything to your children.
- Encyclopedic descriptions of each of the 38 holidays, festivals, fasts, and feasts of the Jewish year...and of every important event of a Jewish lifetime.
- More than twenty different modes of Jewish worship...including the rites of Sephardim, Ashkenazim, and other distinctive Jewish communities in all their variety.
- The art (and architecture) of prayer, with illustrations from the world's great synagogues and collections of Judaica.

This extraordinary work is yours to explore and enjoy—*free*, with membership in the Jewish Book Club. Now in its twelfth year, the Jewish Book Club (a service of the American Jewish Committee) has provided tremendous savings on hundreds of important and bestselling books of Jewish interest. Its many thousands of individual members, as well as synagogues and Jewish community centers across the nation, have been able, through the Club, to enjoy savings on such favorite titles as Abba Eban's *My People;* the *Siddur*, published under the auspices of the Rabbinical Council of America; Irving Howe's *World of Our Fathers; To Jerusalem and Back* by Nobel Prize winner Saul Bellow; plus many, many more—fiction and non-fiction, history, biography, art and archaeology, religion, guides to Jewish living, cookbooks, travel books, deluxe gift editions, children's books—even limited-edition etchings. In short, the Club is a complete buying service for the Jewish reader of today!

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- ►Compiled, edited, and produced in Israel by the editors and publishers of the monumental 16-volume *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*
- ►Complete in one volume of nearly 300 oversize pages (9½" x 10¾").
- ►Illustrations on nearly every page—236 in black and white, 82 in color.
- ►Imported in limited quantity from Israel.
- ►Published at $25.00.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. **Savings up to 50%:** On the best of Jewish-interest reference, fiction, history, biography, archaeology, cooking, travel, religion, art, children's books, records, limited-edition etchings, unique deluxe gift editions.
2. **Quality editions:** All books are identical to the publishers' editions in content, format, size, and quality.
3. **Free magazine:** *The Jewish Book News* provides lively reviews of books, art, and recordings of Jewish interest.
4. **A complete cultural service for the Jewish family:** You'll be able to keep abreast of the best and most important books of Jewish interest—many not available to the general public or stocked by local stores.
5. **Your minimum obligation:** Purchase as few as four additional selections the first year.
6. **A convenience and time-saver:** Home shopping & home delivery.

HOW THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB WORKS

After your membership is accepted, you will begin receiving *The Jewish Book News*, a free publication sent to you thirteen times a year (about every four weeks). All selections and alternates will be described in advance in the magazine. If you want the main selection featured in the magazine, do nothing and it will be sent to you automatically. If you want an alternate or no book at all, simply indicate your choice on the order form always enclosed with the *News* and return it to us so that we receive it by the date specified. This date is designed to allow you at least 10 days to decide whether you want the selection.

Membership guarantee: If your News *is delayed in the mail and therefore you receive the main selection without having had 10 days to notify us, you may return that selection at our expense.*

THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB
165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send my free copy of *Jewish Liturgy* (regularly $25.00) and enroll me in the Jewish Book Club.

I agree to purchase as few as 4 additional selections or alternates during the next 12 months at the special member's prices plus a small charge for postage and handling. All selections and alternates will be described for me in advance in *The Jewish Book News* and I may decline any of them by returning the printed card provided. (Offer valid only in the United States and Canada.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SIGNATURE _____

A Service of the American Jewish Committee

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his unwavering moral confrontation with tormenting actuality.

IN CONTRAST, perhaps because the manipulative intrusions of officialdom became increasingly unbearable, the political resonance of *The City Builder* is deafening. But because Konrád's passionate eloquence hammers out a scheme that is relentlessly abstract, the book reads less like a novel—indeed, it has no narrative—than like an anthology of enraged generalizations; thoughtful, inventively metaphoric, and charged with tremendous feeling, but generalizations for all that. The book is a ruminative internal monologue spoken by another nameless government functionary, an architect and city planner in a provincial city of an unspecified socialist country. Unlike the harrowed guardian of children in *The Case Worker*, the architect never acquires the particularity of a singular human being, but remains a disembodied voice. Now and again his meditations touch upon incidents, rites of passage, a holiday trip, an earthquake, but everything that is said to happen seems hallucinatory, and the people who drift in and out of his thoughts are amorphous shadows. The city planner himself is only a spectral presence reflecting on the illusions and reality of "the city," which is Konrád's rather makeshift emblem for Communist society.

By turns ironic, elegiac, embittered, furious, the city builder turns his monologue into a requiem for the violent disenchantments of revolutionary idealism, which believed it "would build a new city and would imprint the philosophy of history on the environment." But entirely too many of Konrád's sentences in the book are like this —abstract and aphoristic, sometimes surprisingly banal, a stream of sociological and political free-association that can be tediously self-conscious. What he is saying is clear enough, though labored: a middle-aged socialist looks with dismay at the city he has built, and forces himself to remember the youthful idealist he once was, who gradually surrendered to the power-mongering strategies and mendacious compromises of bureaucratic authority. "All that is left of me," he reflects bitterly, "is one continuous parody. I exist by virtue of my mistakes." Now the city is crumbling, and its builder berates himself for having failed to resist the triumphant technicians of power who plundered a once-hopeful society now poisoned with suspicion and hate. As a tool of the state, the planner realizes, he conspired against everything that is human, joyous, and free, and in a scourging outburst (which the Hungarian censors excised), Konrád lashes out at the meanness and servility of a society whose demoralized citizens must "support the arrogant bunglings of bureaucrats."

This scorching jeremiad dramatically brings *The City Builder* to life for two white-hot pages in which Konrád puts aside the ardent but featureless rhetoric of gnomic introspection and impetuous surrealistic improvisation that displace episode and character in the book. Instead of offering us elegantly turned apostrophes of disillusion, Konrád, in this wonderfully reckless, headlong tirade, roars his disgust with the malevolent insolence of a political system that corrupts "the sweetness of human existence" with fear, and congeals the diversity of humankind into a numb caricature of equality.

I do not know how much of this excoriating denunciation was deleted by the Hungarian censors, but Konrád throws caution and prudence to the winds throughout *The City Builder* and nonetheless this angry, thorny novel, largely unbowdlerized, was published in Hungary. How long the "Hungarian Spring" will last, how long Konrád will make the most of such unprecedented complaisance on the part of the Hungarian regime toward his abrasive candor, is of course unforeseeable.

YET this formidably intelligent writer is so impatient with the superficial platitudes of politics that he resists the label of "dissidence" which the West would settle on him, along with the bureaucratic inanities of the commissars. In a speech that he delivered to the Venice Biennale on Cultural Dissent a few months ago*—he was the only writer living in Eastern Europe who attended the conference, because he was the only one who got a visa—he attacked those patronizing critics in the West who think that dissidence alone determines what is "good" or "bad" in the work coming out of the closed societies of Eastern Europe. This simplistic politicizing of literature makes Konrád bristle, for he believes that

> the fate of a truthful work of art is always uncertain. . . . As in other parts of the world, good works cannot be born without moral perseverance in our region. But if moral courage is not radical enough to be universal; if the artist cannot extend his criticism of state socialism to a criticism of our civilization; if he doesn't ultimately offer an ironic critique of the entire human race, then he is not rising above ideological journalism.

In a sense, this sweeping declaration about the aim of literature is itself ideological because Konrád fails to take account of the political distinctions between state socialism and "our civilization" as a whole. Without such distinctions, his statement is fuzzy—a facile and declamatory generalization without substance. What is moving about Konrád's speech in Venice is not what he actually said, but the overwhelming sense one gets of his utter weariness with politically defined thought and feeling, his unappeasable yearning to be done with all that debilitating intensity. When such a prodigiously gifted writer must walk along the ruthless knife edge of political uncertainty, it forces us to acknowledge how much the writers in Western democracies take entirely for granted.

IN AN ESSAY on David Riesman written in 1954, Lionel Trilling observed, thinking of the novelist's ambivalent relation to his society, that "he at once loves and hates the social world he lives in. He hates and despises and denounces his society and tries always to transcend it, but he cannot surrender his fascinated contemplation of it; he loves it if only for the oc-

* "The Long Work of Liberty," *New York Review of Books*, January 26, 1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

casion it provides for him to exercise his art of hating, despising, and denouncing." Trilling scarcely needed to specify that he was referring to novelists whose liberty to practice the art of hating, despising, and denouncing could not even remotely be threatened or curtailed by a repressive government. But if one imagines his hypothetical novelist to be a Russian, a Pole, a Hungarian, a Czech, we realize with unaccustomed clarity how indisputable is the American novelist's freedom to exercise his art of hating, despising, and denouncing his freedom, as Hilton Kramer has put it, "to be trivial, cavalier, and myopic, even about the politics that guarantees this choice." Indeed, sometimes it seems that most American novelists today exercise no art except that of hatred and denunciation. If a pressure to conform—and it is cultural, not political—does exist, it turns the predicament of Eastern European writers inside out. For it is the novels that savage American society which are awarded the highest praise and are pushed with the greatest fervor by the literary opinion-makers. And even those novelists who are less driven by paranoiac antagonism feel that they can squander their freedom with impunity. I can think of very few present-day American writers who have revealed how much they cherish their unbounded liberty—most recently Saul Bellow in *Mr. Sammler's Planet.*

The irony, as the editors of *Kontinent*—a literary journal published by Soviet émigré writers in Paris—stated in their first issue, is that "in the dark times of reactionary czarism," no writer was forced to seek out publishers abroad because his work was forbidden at home. "In that time of 'slavery' . . . starting with Pushkin and Gogol and ending with Tolstoy and Dostoevsky . . . all native Russian writers worthy of any notice whatsoever . . . were published in their own country." It may well be that the Czar, unlike the Bolsheviks, was unmoved by the power of the word.

NEW FROM...

Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France

TROYES AND REIMS, 1786–1790. *Lynn A. Hunt.* Troyes and Reims, two medium sized textile-manufacturing towns in Champagne, experienced the Revolution in strikingly different ways. The author attributes these differences to a combination of economic, social, and political factors that shaped the structure of local politics before and during 1789, and that go far toward explaining the wide variety of local reactions throughout France to the fall of the Old Regime. At the same time, underlying similarities in the two towns' reactions to the events of 1789 help to suggest what was truly national about the Revolution. $11.50

Marx's Theory of History

William H. Shaw. This fresh approach to Marx's theory of historical materialism is an attempt "to excavate what Marx's theory says, unpack its meaning, explore its nuances, and highlight some of its internal difficulties." The result is an argument for the basic coherence of historical materialism, and thus for an interpretation of Marx that is at odds with current orthodoxy. Focusing on concepts basic to Marx's understanding of the dynamics of historical evolution, the author illuminates two of the more complex problems of the Marxian canon: the transition from capitalism to socialism and the evolution of precapitalist society. $12.50

Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca

John K. Chance. The central concern of this study of changing social stratification in the city of Oaxaca is the development and function of the *sistema de castas*—the system of ranked ethnic statuses, encoded in Spanish law, that emerged in response to the growth of the New World's racially mixed population. Rejecting previous interpretations of the system, the author uses a wealth of new anthropological and historical data to demonstrate that the system was far from static throughout the three centuries of colonial rule, and much less rigid than commonly supposed. $14.00

STANFORD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Death Watch

ANNE SEXTON: A SELF-PORTRAIT IN LETTERS. Edited by LINDA GRAY SEXTON and LOIS AMES. *Houghton Mifflin. 433 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

IN THE fall of 1974 Anne Sexton committed suicide by asphyxiating herself in the garage of her home in Weston, Massachusetts. This end had not been unexpected. When, as the editors of this compendium respectfully put it, "she took herself," it was the third and final attempt of a death-obsessed existence. The obsession with suicide was one she had in common with Sylvia Plath, with whom she had attended Robert Lowell's poetry seminars in the late 50's. After class, over martinis, they had shared stories of their failed attempts, discussed ways and means and cures.

Unlike Sylvia Plath, whose fame was posthumously won, Anne Sexton's career was richly rewarded during her lifetime, her celebrity status established long before her death at forty-six. Yet this difference aside, the fame conferred on both these careers was of a piece. If Sylvia Plath was elevated to a place of importance in American letters during a period that was conspicuously hospitable to the idea of woman's martyrdom—that was inclined to idealize breakdown and madness as forms of cultural defiance—the same period and the same atmosphere nurtured Anne Sexton's career as well. The breakdowns, the incarcerations in mental hospitals documented in much of her poetry, her central themes of madness and despair, all helped win for her precisely the same audience that had made a cult figure of Sylvia Plath, and for roughly the same reasons. Ever busy even today, the Plath industry still turns out essays on her life and her suicide. In a recent compilation of these, one scholar takes the position that it was being a poet that killed Sylvia Plath, a contention for which he is taken to task by other contributors: most members of the Plath cult know that it was being a woman and a mother that killed Sylvia Plath.

Anne Sexton too was a wife and mother, as well as a poet: a wife, moreover, to a man she had married at twenty and who, by the time they were both in their forties, had become something of an embarrassment. Like most of her literary friends, Anne Sexton had become a peace activist and something of a "movement" person generally, in the way of the 60's. But Alfred "Kayo" Sexton had not. The stubbornly unprogressive Kayo went so far as to put a sticker on his windshield that said "Register Communists Not Firearms," an act which caused his wife no small discomfiture. "Rigid" and "politically repulsive" is the way she describes Kayo in a letter to a friend a few years before she asked for a divorce. But with the divorce and the dissolution of the one bond that had been, however embarrassingly, her emotional mainstay, she entered a period of decline and loneliness which ended a year later in her suicide. She had imagined that divorce would yield a life rich in romantic possibilities, with men who were *peers*. In this it turned out she was mistaken. The men and the romances were few—so few, indeed, that she turned to a computer dating service—and the despair and loneliness more intense than ever before.

By the time of her death she had written nine volumes of poetry, one of which earned her a Pulitzer Prize. Poetry saved her, she tells one of her correspondents: it gave focus to her life, a reason for continuing. But if Anne Sexton's poems saved her from illness, they also carried the stamp of that illness. The artifice and posturing which informed most of her commerce with the world—as these letters to friends, fellow poets, editors, and family show—are not less evident in her poems. Anne Sexton's is, indeed, a poetic voice that seems, even when most intense, to lack heart. The falsification of feeling that is a prominent feature of her poems, including the most celebrated among them, emerges more often than not in the form of contrived metaphor, exercises in compression that are at once agile and empty of resonance. One of her most famous poems, called "Live" (1966), is as good a case in point as any, an "affirmation" that has more to do with eliciting approval, a skill at which she was adept when she wished to be, than with any profound realization of life's value:

> So I won't hang around in
> my hospital shift,
> repeating the Black Mass
> and all of it.
> I say *Live, Live* because
> of the sun,
> the dream, the excitable gift.

There were, to be sure, instances when emotional integrity triumphed, notably when her eye turned inward on her life's obsession, suicide, the impulses toward which had yielded her an identity as strong as, and possibly stronger than, any she had found as a poet. Indeed, it was when that identity was most available to her that she seemed to perform best as a poet:

> But suicides have a
> special language.
> Like carpenters they want
> to know *which tools*
> They never ask *why build.*
> ("Wanting To Die," 1964)

Among the letters collected here, none is as strong and evocative as the one she writes her husband during a trip to Europe, in which she confirms her inability to function alone. For Anne Sexton, whose poetry Robert Lowell praised for its "swift, lyrical openness," was clearly all her life a stranger, like a good many other profoundly neu-

DOROTHY RABINOWITZ, *a regular contributor to* COMMENTARY, *is the author of* New Lives: Survivors of the Holocaust Living in America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE HISTORY THAT'S AS COMPELLING AS THE HEADLINES.

In this comprehensive and up-to-date history of Israel and of its relations with the United States, author Nadav Safran brilliantly describes Israel's struggle for existence, from the 1947 United Nations partition resolution through Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy to Carter's peace campaign.

Safran combines the immediacy of journalism with the balanced view of history to guide his readers through the wars, crises, setbacks, and victories of Israel's 30-year history.

Turning to Israel's relationship with the United States, he analyzes the evolution of the alliance and its impact on both Israeli politics and the international situation.

Essential reading for anyone concerned with the complexities of the Middle East and the modern state of Israel.

ISRAEL

THE EMBATTLED ALLY

NADAV SAFRAN

$18.50

The Belknap Press of HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rotic people, to the ordinary range of feelings and emotions. In some measure aware, as such people are, that there was something lacking in her relationship to feeling, she became a watcher, an obsessed observer, and sometimes a skilled imitator of the way other people deal with one another.

None of this prevented her from establishing a marriage, and winning friends, until such time as the extraordinary demands she made on them caused them to retreat. When she wished to be, she was a master politician, capable, as one after another of these letters shows, of any flattery and backbiting that might advance her career. In one, written to W. D. Snodgrass, she refers slightingly to Nolan Miller of the *Antioch Review* and wonders whether his recommendation would be helpful in getting her a grant to Yaddo. The next letter is to Nolan Miller and begins, "Dear Nolan: You are my favorite famous person!"

Next to those with her daughters, to whom she was devoted, her truest and most uncalculating relationships appear to have been with the fans who wrote her from mental hospitals. To these she was unstinting in her displays of concern and warmth, her letters a proof in their way of the emotional power reserved exclusively for that which touched the mainsprings of her identity, the suicidal and the mad. That with all this she became a poet widely celebrated in America and ranked among the best has far more to do with the illness of contemporary culture than with any triumph of art over infirmity.

School & Society

OUR CHILDREN'S CRIPPLED FUTURE: THE FAILURE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION. By FRANK E. ARMBRUSTER with PAUL BRACKEN. *Quadrangle. 308 pp. $14.00.*

Reviewed by PAUL GAGNON

THAT this flawed, badly-written book must be judged useful to our understanding of American education is a sign of how much trouble the schools are in, and how unhelpful most public discourse on this subject is. It will not do to dismiss the book, as some critics already have done, for its "nostalgia" or "naive traditionalism"—it says too many things that need to be said and seldom are, outside of little monthly bulletins from the Council for Basic Education. Armbruster's main point is undeniable: despite (sometimes because of) greatly increased spending on public schools over recent decades, most children are cheated, and children from poor backgrounds are crippled for life, by educators who fail to ask enough of them. Extravagant gadgetry, "innovative" (i.e., condescending) teaching methods, and "relevant" courses have resulted in a decline in aptitude and achievement scores throughout the country, irrespective of region, race, or social class. By surrendering the making of school policy to a self-promoting caste of experts, we have been guilty of an appalling waste of taxpayers' money and of our children's minds.

The author goes on to demonstrate that academic standards are discarded first in the very schools that need them most, the ones enrolling the underprivileged. Instead of working doubly hard to fill the gaps left by home and neighborhood, these schools themselves become "suppressive environments." The failure of discipline, too, strikes hardest at the children of the poor, depriving them of that ordered environment which alone might free them to learn, and their teachers to teach. Worse still is the abandonment of standard English grammar, vocabulary, and speech, on grounds that they are irrelevant or oppressive to slum and minority-group children. Middle-class educationists, according to the author, have simply refused to admit that disadvantaged children need *more* content and *more* conventional teaching than do the children of the educated middle classes; instead, they get less.

Armbruster pleads for a restoration to the primary-school curriculum of the three R's, plus geography, spelling, and penmanship, and to the high-school curriculum of history (three years, including Western civilization), great books, English, mathematics, real science, foreign languages, writing, and speech. There are subjects and skills, he implies, that no one in a democracy has the right to be allowed to evade:

> Children in high school do not know, nor do their parents, what they will be doing in later life. If an opportunity should arise for them to go higher by means of advanced education, or positions that require better education of the classical type, these children should not be denied that right because of the failure of schools to insist that they learn the fundamentals in the traditional academic areas in primary and secondary school.

ARMBRUSTER is certainly right as far as he goes. But he neglects those broader aims of education, beyond the utilitarian, that alone would justify the academic requirements he is urging. Why, after all, should everybody study Western civilization and read poetry and great books? Why should everybody achieve some grasp of science, and of the music and painting of the past, when only a few can expect to rise to positions which, in his words, "require better education of the classical type"? Armbruster's anger will carry no force—and the follies he deplores in American schools will persist—as long as we limit ourselves to training people to fill useful slots in society.

Some of the 18th-century founders of the Republic believed that free politics and human dignity could proceed only from right education, education that would make informed citizens and cultivated persons of all who were able to learn, without regard to their daily work. But the mainstream of American education quickly subsided into utilitarianism. The public schools most Americans have attended offer little to the free citizen (the "good" citizen is something else) and even less to the cultivation, rather than the amusement, of the private person.

The emptiness goes back a long way. In 1918, for example, the U.S. Bureau of Education published a

PAUL GAGNON *teaches history at the University of Massachusetts/Boston and is the author of* France Since 1789.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

series of guidelines for American high schools under the title *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,* which ignored subject matter. Instead, "health" and "worthy home membership" led the list of goals for high schools, which were to be made responsible for solving (or circumventing) problems erupting from the social order itself. "Education," said John Dewey, "is the fundamental method of social progress and reform," a notion that would remain the prime source of our confusions over schooling until the present day. From Dewey and his predecessors through William Heard Kilpatrick's master device of "problem-solving" there runs a straight line to the latest vogue of "Moral Education" and "Doing-a-Value."

Those school systems which did manage to hold to some version of required general education through the 1930's usually did so only in their college preparatory tracks. Otherwise, the social instrumentalists prospered. In 1947, the national Commission on Life Adjustment for Youth pronounced only 20 per cent of American adolescents capable of higher education, with another 20 per cent fit for disciplined vocational training. The high schools, in other words, could forget about intellectual training for 80 per cent of our children, most of whom were deemed uneducable. Again in 1959, James Bryant Conant, in his influential post-Sputnik book, *The American High School Today,* found only 15 to 20 per cent of American adolescents "academically talented," and able to profit from "rewardingly advanced courses in mathematics, science, and foreign languages or general education courses in English and social studies." The rest, he said, should "follow vocational goals and develop general interests." Scant faith in most children's potential is nothing new in America. Our secondary schools have never tried to do for everybody what Armbruster now asks them to do.

He is nonetheless right in looking for help elsewhere than to the pedagogical establishment, with its retinue of consultants, analysts, managers, specialists, and publicists. Questions of purpose and standards are too broad for this new multitude of quasi-professionals, who have not been trained or hired to think about general issues, but rather to concoct and promote ceaseless change, and to tell the rest of us what is good and bad for classrooms they rarely see. Armbruster's distrust of these specialists is well-founded, but unfortunately he too is remote from the classroom and badly confused about ordinary teachers and their part, or their lack of part, in making policy. Though some teachers may welcome and exploit the policies handed down by the experts, they do not make them. Typically, not a single teacher served on HEW's recent National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education, which purported to "revolutionize" all secondary education.

Armbruster muddles questions of cost and student-teacher ratio as well. He says repeatedly that we spent $75 billion on schools last year, more than was spent on national defense, and he implies that most of the money allocated to education goes to pay classroom teachers (whose salary scales he distorts by ignoring time spent out of school hours), that the student-teacher ratio has dramatically improved over the years, and that, therefore, we are wasting money on small classes.

The truth is that ordinary teachers, especially of those basic subjects Armbruster rightly stresses, have not much increased in numbers relative to students taught; apart from buildings, equipment, materials, and fuel, most of the money has been spent on the costly services of auxiliary personnel, counselors, media specialists, technicians, roving experts, and "resource persons" of all types, as well as on administrators and purveyors of "enrichments" from driver education to film-making. At both the secondary and university levels, the per-student constant-dollar costs of direct academic instruction have risen only feebly if at all, while overall costs have skyrocketed. Armbruster is mistaken in supposing that schools doing what he asks —demanding enough work of students and subjecting that work to

Copyright—Charles Sinks

Robert H. Bork argues that antitrust works against those it should protect.

By pursuing actions that are politically popular—but legally and economically unsound—the government's antitrust lawyers are actually working against the best interests of consumers. In this provocative new book, Robert Bork shows how anti-monopoly policy has become a form of costly protection for inefficient business, and how the flood of today's prosecutions threatens the public's protection against genuine excesses in the future.

THE ANTITRUST PARADOX
A Policy at War with Itself
Robert H. Bork

The former Solicitor General of the United States, a nationally respected legal scholar at the Yale Law School, traces the development of antitrust theory in terms of the legal and economic issues confronting antitrust policy, and offers valuable recommendations for reform.

$18.00 at bookstores, or direct from the publisher.

NEW. SIGNIFICANT.
BASIC
BASIC BOOKS INC.
10 EAST 53RD ST NEW YORK 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DECADE OF DECISIONS

American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976

William B. Quandt

Quandt analyzes the formulation of American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, with emphasis on the role of crisis in shaping the views of policy makers and the importance of Presidential leadership in translating general principles into concrete decisions.
"An incisive job . . . (Quandt's) argument is persuasive and is presented with admirable clarity."
—*Publishers Weekly*
A selection of History Book Club
321 pages, 3 maps, cloth $14.95, paper $4.95

At bookstores
University of California Press
Berkeley 94720

HARRISON E. SALISBURY

tells the full story of the fall of the Romanov dynasty and the triumph of revolution in Russia, in a narrative that is a fusion of suspense, fascinating people and startling events. Working from many unplumbed primary sources and interviews with survivors, he has given us the best book yet about one of the cataclysmic events of our century. Notes; bibliog.; index; 746 pages; $14.95.

BLACK NIGHT, WHITE SNOW:
Russia's Revolutions 1905-1917

DOUBLEDAY

close criticism and corrective instruction—could be less expensive without a drastic shift in budgetary priorities.

Whatever their failings, teachers know better than most what is wrong and right with American education. The best among them also know that what is wrong will not be cured by a simple return to "basics" any more than by the mindless "greening" of the 60's, by today's hard-boiled "Career Education," or by the zeal for "Future Learning" that currently takes the lion's share of space in the journals. They stand awash in the debris left by successive tides of faddism, quite aware that until we set the aims of schooling above the instantly measurable and utilitarian, nothing much will change.

There can be no explaining why students must confront the subject matter of a liberal education until the purposes of schooling are redefined as the education of all citizens to the highest level of political competence and personal culture they are capable of. "Any lesser goal," Lawrence Cremin said a decade ago in *The Genius of American Education*, "is narrow and unlovely, and ultimately destructive of democracy." The "failure of American education" lies not so much in dismal test scores as in forgetting what schools are about.

Photography as Elegy

IMAGE BEFORE MY EYES: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND, 1864-1939. By LUCJAN DOBROSZYCKI and BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT. *Schocken. 269 pp. $22.95.*

AN ILLUSTRATED SOURCEBOOK ON THE HOLOCAUST, VOLUME I. By ZOSA SZAJKOWSKI. *Ktav. 155 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by RUTH R. WISSE

WHEN the Book of Lamentations of our time is composed, it may well take the form of a picture album. Among Jews, at least, the literary language of suffering and loss is so worn with recycling that it scarcely seems able to contain the most recent and ruinous of the many destructions visited upon this people. For the moment, the fixed images of photographs, some of them already as familiar as were daily prayers to an earlier generation, offer a purer form of private commemoration and mourning than anything the present generation has been able to manage in words.

Two recent publications, dissimilar in every respect save their dedication to the Jewish world destroyed during World War II, sharpen the focus of deprivation and grief. *Image Before My Eyes,* a photographic history, was originally assembled by Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research as a full-scale exhibition, tracing the life of Jews in Poland from the advent of photography to the destruction of its subject. As the title suggests, the book is mindful of its medium; both its vision and its range are determined by the technical limitations of the camera and the varying fashions of photographers. The authors, accordingly, devote the opening and most innovative section to the history of Jewish photography in Poland, with introductions to all the major artists and collectors; the frame closes with a final chapter on the pre-war Yiddish cinema, a lively industry whose promise would remain largely unrealized. Individual photographs are treated as "cultural artifacts," closely identified as to time, place, photographer, collector, as well as subject. The authors' uninflected, somewhat stiff, anthropological style adds a further sense of distance and reserve.

To correct common misconceptions about the homogeneity and traditionalism of the East European Jews, the book emphasizes their differences and the increasingly strong inroads made by modernity. The geographic region of Poland is distinguished from the general mass of "Eastern Europe," and a statistical and toponymic appendix forces a recognition of spe-

RUTH R. WISSE *teaches Yiddish literature at McGill University and is the author of* The Schlemiel as Modern Hero *and* A Shtetl and Other Yiddish Novellas.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cific settings and locales. Here are middle-class Jews as well as the poor, modern factory workers (and strikers) as well as homebound artisans. From the year 1937 there are, among others, a photograph of the five Purim players of Szydlowice, costumed in mock military regalia, and a publicity shot of the flyweight boxing champion of Poland who happened that year to be a Jew. The section on Zionism includes group pictures of delegates to the Orthodox Mizrachi convention and of the first motorcycle team of the Warsaw Maccabee Sports Club. The tension between tradition and modernity, so characteristic of pre-war Jewish life in Poland, animates the book and gives it thematic coherence. Despite the static pose of most of the photographs, eyes looking out at history as if skeptical of being remembered, the book as a whole reflects the fierce vitality of the period, its almost palpable tempo of restlessness and change.

An Illustrated Sourcebook on the Holocaust, Volume I, focuses not on the Jewish communities of pre-war Europe but on the dedication of the Third Reich to their annihilation. In hundreds of documents, cartoons, bulletins, posters, and pictures, arranged with no apparent design but simply with the purpose of including as many items as possible, the book sets out for the record the obsessive energy of Nazi anti-Semitism, its crudity, obscenity, and pervasive force. The author, Zosa Szajkowski, offers only the sparest of captions, few translations of German or other documents, and even fewer explanations of the sources or of the historical context of his materials. Perhaps for this very reason, the frenzy of those years stands out in bolder relief. Though clearly the result of extensive search and research, the book is without the scholarly language and format that would secure objective detachment. Instead, from the first *Stürmer* caricatures of the 1930's to the book's concluding twenty pages of destroyed synagogues and Jewish graveyards, the reader is overwhelmed by a deluge of horror and hate.

As Szajkowski points out in his brief introduction, the mass and nature of the visual materials depicted in this volume are intended to demonstrate the extent and the lethal intensity of anti-Semitism in the Nazi years:

> . . . the populace of Germany and German-occupied countries learned about these matters in the streets, cafés, restaurants, and shops; at exhibitions, theaters, movies, and sporting events; through speeches on the radio and at meetings; through newspapers, magazines, and books. It was well-nigh impossible to take a step without coming across notices. . . .

In fact, in this massive collection of visual materials, the most "ordinary" shots can have the most shocking effect: a snapshot, for instance, of the storefront of a Jewish-owned bookstore on which

Now Available:

The Servile State
By Hilaire Belloc

A perceptive warning, first published in 1913, of the consequences of statism and the effect of socialist doctrine on capitalist society. With an introduction by Robert Nisbet. "A landmark of political thought in this century"—Walter Lippmann. Hardcover $8.00, Softcover $2.00.

Arator
By John Taylor

The most popular and influential work by John Taylor of Caroline, foremost philosopher of the conservative Jeffersonians. This edition includes sixty-four essays, practical and political, on farming and the social order of an agricultural republic. Edited and with an introduction by M. E. Bradford. Hardcover $9.00, Softcover $3.00.

¡Viva Vivas!
Henry Regnery, Editor

Eliseo Vivas has attained eminence and respect as a philosopher, teacher and author. This volume in his honor includes a bibliography of his published works and essays by Hugh Kenner, Russell Kirk, Peter J. Stanlis, Stephen J. Tonsor and others. "A worthy tribute to a worthy man"—*The Christian Century.* Hardcover $7.95.

LibertyPress LibertyClassics

We pay postage on prepaid orders.
To order these books, or for a copy of our catalog, write:
LibertyPress/LibertyClassics
7440 North Shadeland, Dept. 135
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JEWISH IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

Steven T. Katz

The Building Blocks of the Jewish Intellectual Tradition

Here is a book that offers an accurate, informative, rich picture of Judaism. It will serve as the basis for a proper understanding of Judiasm. It presents the main elements of those Jewish concepts that form the building blocks of the Jewish intellectual tradition. Most importantly, these concepts are presented in terms of their uniquely Jewish significance.

In this book fundamental concepts are explored in terms of their specific use in the classical Jewish sources, the Bible and the rabbinic materials, as well as in medieval Jewish philosophy, Kabbalah and modern Jewish thought.

Jewish Ideas and Concepts is a basic guide to the history of Jewish thought and an excellent introduction to the fundamentals of Judaism. It will prove to be a lifetime reference source.

Jewish Ideas and Concepts is divided into three main sections: God, Man, and God and the Jew. Within this framework, the major concepts of Judaism are presented: the names of God, the attributes of God, the manifestations of God, the nature and purpose of man and of woman, sin, repentance and forgiveness, death, the Covenant, the Chosen People, revelation, Torah, *mitzvot, and* "Sanctification of the Name."

From the Biblical era to the Holocaust and the present day, Jewish Ideas and Concepts is a reliable guide to Jewish thought and philosophy and to a clear understanding of Judaism.

Steven T. Katz is a professor at Dartmouth College.

$12.50 at all bookstores

SCHOCKEN

200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016

someone has painted *"Ist in Dachau,"* or a fashion photograph of a lovely German girl wearing a dress made out of a prayershawl.

At least one familiar picture appears in both books: a trainload of German soldiers setting out for Poland in 1939 with a German slogan scrawled large on the side of the cars, "We are going to Poland to beat up the Jews." In *Image Before My Eyes,* the blow-up of this photograph, occupying half a page, provides an eloquent visual conclusion to the historical overview of Jewish life in Poland. In Szajkowski's book, the photograph barely attracts notice in a corner, but the caption throbs with outrage: "Note the woman and child saying goodby." We are to observe not merely the looming Jewish catastrophe, but the plump mother, child in arms, smiling goodby to her soldier husband as he departs —a reminder that for others it was just business as usual.

HOMAGE can take many forms. The first of these books, handsomely published, pays the past its due through care of presentation, through a meticulous regard for accurate detail in matters small and large. The second, not yet past anger, recalls the incredible *insult* of the Holocaust to its victims and to the human image. In both, the selection and arrangement of the demonstrable facts of recent history result in good documentary texts and in deeply expressive modern modes of elegy.

Student Lawyers

ONE L. By SCOTT TUROW. *Putnam. 300 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

THE majestic reputation of the Harvard Law School is built in part on fancy and in part on fact; it is part fancy and part fact that every year, 550 of the country's brightest young men and women enroll in a rewarding course of study at the hands of a distinguished faculty. Scott Turow agrees that the students are splendid, but he strongly dissents from the common estimate of the soundness of the course of study and the quality and virtue of the professors. In this book, Turow, a former teacher of writing at Stanford, describes with high emotion and drama the baleful effects of the first year of law school on himself and his circle of friends. His purpose in so doing would seem to be to make the Harvard Law School engage in an examination of conscience, followed by repentance, confession, and, one presumes, a change in policies.

Looking back at the end of the year, Turow summarizes the suffering endured by first-year students:

> They have been treated as incompetents, terrorized daily, excluded from privileges, had their value beliefs ridiculed, and in general felt their sense of self-worth thoroughly demeaned. If you get knocked down often enough, you learn not to stand up, and after being a Harvard 1-L, a silent crawl to the finish line looks to many students to be the better part of valor.

How does all this happen? By means of notes taken week by week during the school year, Turow recounts experiences that might befit a Gulag Archipelago or a concentration camp. The course of study, Turow says, makes the students "obsessive" and turns the dormitories into "madhouses" of people scrambling to stay on top of their work and each other. The work itself is "overwhelming," "crushing," and "frightening." The classroom, where teachers meet students, is a place of "fear" and "panic." Even in the first week students regard the work as "sheer oppression"; in the second week, the atmosphere is "all darkness and eyestrain and a constant chipping away." By the time exams come, in the middle of the year, students are in a "frenzy," the atmosphere "shakes the whole place to pieces."

FOR Turow, all this is to be explained in large part by conventional practice at Harvard: faculty brutalization of students. In *One L,*

WILLIAM J. BENNETT, *a graduate of the Harvard Law School, is executive officer of the National Humanities Center in North Carolina.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this practice is embodied in its most extreme form by a professor of contracts to whom Turow gives the pseudonym Perini. As Turow describes him, Perini does not simply lecture, or ask questions of students, or correct their wrong answers, he "whirls," "points," and "pounces," and runs his classes like "the Star Chamber." Before the first class meeting, Perini puts his first assignment on an announcement board and ends with the notation, "Be certain to read all the material carefully." Turow observes tremulously, "Professor Perini had underlined the last word *carefully* twice." This is the kind of man Perini is. At the same meeting, Perini looks at the seating chart with the students' names on it, and then he "took a pencil from his pocket and pointed it at the chart. It might as well have been a pistol. Please, no, I thought."

Oddly, despite his disgust with the Harvard approach, Turow confesses to being unable to rise above the general degradation. Although the atmosphere of Harvard Law School is abhorrent to him, it entices him as well. On the one hand, Harvard Law School stands for the opposite of everything he has ever believed in. It is a school "characterized by terror and a suppression of feeling," where student security is "invaded" when one is called on in class, and where the freshmen are tutored in "strategies for avoiding the human," and suffer "the indignity of being examined and marked." To Turow, who believes in "feelings" and "being compassionate," who spent "much of my life in activist politics—the civil-rights and the anti-war movements, the McGovern campaign in '72"—and who believes that education should be "a humane cooperative enterprise," all this is anathema. And yet, even with his armor of the spirit, Turow finds himself becoming more and more "competitive" as the year draws on. Near the approach of exams, he hears "murder" in his voice when he speaks of his classmates. He is "meeting the enemy," becoming one of them, becoming, like many of his classmates, a gruesome caricature of the worst features of Perini-type professors. His whole identity, his entire self-esteem, becomes "based on his presence at the Harvard Law School."

What can redeem this gruesome situation? Turow sees a chance in the salutary effect on the law school brought about by the presence of more women on campus. Women, Turow says, "insist on their rights more aggressively than any other minority [*sic*] group at HLS." On the other hand (paradoxically?), women have a "greater aversion to aggressiveness," and a "sensitivity to the use of power." They recognize evil more clearly and call it by its proper name. Thus, they are prophets of reformation. " 'I know how this sounds,' " a woman classmate once told Turow,

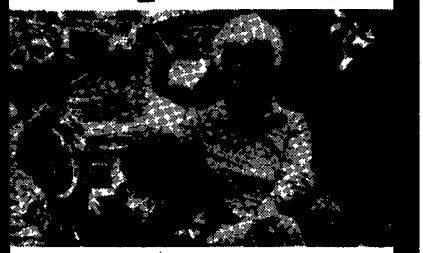
> "but a lot of women say the same thing. When I get called on, I really think about rape. It's sudden. You're exposed. You can't move. You can't say no. And there's this man who's in control telling you exactly what to do. Maybe that's melodramatic," she said, "but for me a lot of the stuff in class shows up all kinds of male/female power relations that I've sort of been training myself to resent."

One L reads so much like a parody of itself that one is hard put to comment on it. To this observer, at least, it would seem that if there really are a lot of students like Turow, eager to debase themselves on the altar of their own illusions about what the Harvard Law School requires of them, and who can do as little as he obviously did for their own or the school's character, then perhaps it is time for the admissions office to consider recruiting more grown-ups as law students. My own candidate for admission would be Turow's wife, Annette, who, having heard nothing for a year but Perini stories, decided one day to visit the class to see the demon at his work.

Sitting in the back, after appropriate warnings from her husband, Annette watches Perini conduct a class that makes everyone there furious. "Brewing hatred," Perini scolds a student for not being prepared, and tells him to repair this deficiency for the next session. Following this upbraiding, the class calls a mass meeting, and heatedly

An epic fortune.

An epic family.

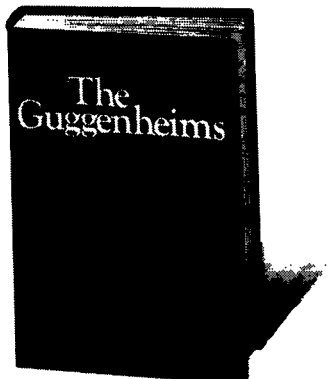


The Guggenheims
An American Epic
by John H. Davis

"An engrossing story of an extraordinary family." —Linus Pauling

"Sweeps the Guggenheims out of the polite confines of philanthropy, presenting the dazzling variety of their influence and the troubled family they have actually been. Candid, sensitive, enormously readable." —Eric Goldman, author of *Rendez-vous with Destiny* and *The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*

"Fascinating, funny, and human and sad." —Stephen Birmingham, author of *Our Crowd*



32 pages of photos. $14.95

WILLIAM MORROW

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOVELS
by J. Inchardi
$10 each.

Lines On The Death Of A Fisherman
Three Jews In A Tub
Dreamship
Yurros
A Paper Toy
Intercurse

Order by mail from
Sirius Books, Box 177
Freeport, Maine 04032

" . . . a fascinating departure from jargon-as-usual and a refreshing plunge into modern man's political-personal condition . . . "
Publishers Weekly

The Tragic Sense of Political Life

by Michael Weinstein

x, 190 pages $9.95

To order, send your check for $9.95 or Visa/Master Charge information to the
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS
Columbia SC 29208

draws up a complaint and an indictment against Perini which one of the students leaks to the press. Yet as they leave for home after all the commotion, Annette announces to her husband, "You know, it wasn't *that* bad." Turow, surprised, replies, "Babe, did you see the *hatred* when he looked at the kid?" But Annette persists, "You've been saying all year how terrible he is. That's all I hear every night—Perini's so tough, Perini's so mean. And now you're having mass meetings." Turow confesses to having second thoughts: "Maybe she was right." No wonder lawyers have a bad name.

Philadelphia Story

THE COP WHO WOULD BE KING: THE HONORABLE FRANK RIZZO. By JOSEPH R. DAUGHEN and PETER BINZEN. *Little, Brown. 344 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by MURRAY FRIEDMAN

FRANK RIZZO, the son of an Italian immigrant, never finished high school. Like his father, he became a policeman, and seemed destined to live out his life in the upper reaches of the police bureaucracy. In December 1963, he was appointed one of the city's four deputy police commissioners. In 1967, after Philadelphia had experienced racial disorders of the kind that would soon engulf Detroit, Newark, Watts, and other cities, Rizzo was appointed police commissioner; though labeled a racist by many blacks, he soon became the most important political force in the city. As a candidate of "law and order," he ran for mayor in 1971, first defeating liberal opponents in the Democratic primary and then going on to win in the general election against Thacher Longstreth, executive vice president of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and formerly head of the Philadelphia Urban League.

In the almost two terms he has been in office, Rizzo has managed to maintain his reputation among the city's white ethnics as a hero who saved the city from anarchy (although he failed to halt the decline of the ethnic neighborhoods he had pledged to preserve). Always a colorful figure, he was at first something of a hero to the media too, in part because he was such good copy. But his performance has led to a noticeable cooling of that particular romance. In what is perhaps the best-known incident of his mayoralty, he submitted to, and failed, a lie-detector test, proposed to him by the Philadelphia *Daily News*, in connection with a political deal which he had denied having made.

Although they concede that he is not a racist, and credit him with holding the line on taxes during his first administration, Joseph Daughen and Peter Binzen appraise Rizzo harshly:

> His leadership as mayor [has been] nonexistent. . . . Not a single program, not a single goal, not a single display of vision has marked his tenure. He proved to be a do-nothing mayor with a big mouth who spent his time trying to destroy his enemies while building his own power base, all at the taxpayers' expense.

Not everyone would agree with this judgment. It is doubtful that *any* mayor, in fact, could have reversed such long-term recent trends—in Philadelphia and in other large cities of the Northeast—as the disappearance of the middle and upper classes to the suburbs and the consequent loss of money and leadership; the flight of jobs to other parts of the country; and the accumulation within the city of the poor and the psychologically maimed. Indeed, since this book was completed, and at a time when Rizzo has been seriously weakened by mistakes and the accumulation of public attacks on him, his administration has had some modest success on the economic front. The Philadelphia *Inquirer*, for example, which is no admirer of Rizzo, recently noted that "there is widespread agreement that the administration is doing all it can [to rejuvenate the city's economy]—and doing it more professionally and

MURRAY FRIEDMAN *teaches a course in Minority Problems at La Salle College in Philadelphia and has edited a collection of essays,* Overcoming Middle-Class Rage.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imaginatively than at any time in the six years that it has been in power."

The authors of this book, both of whom are long-time Philadelphia journalists, do succeed in capturing Rizzo the man. They are less successful in dealing with the forces that brought him into being. They operate from a premise which is shared by the city's elite, namely, that Philadelphia experienced a sort of Camelot phase which started in 1951 with the election of two upper-class patricians, Joseph Clark as mayor and Richardson Dilworth as district attorney. (Dilworth later became mayor and Clark was elected to the U.S. Senate.) During this phase, which coincided with the post-World War II economic boom and the period of intense civil-rights activity, and which lasted roughly to the mid-60's, Clark and Dilworth initiated a series of wide-ranging reforms: redevelopment projects that lured some middle-class whites back into Center City, a rewriting of the city charter, and an expansion of the civil service. But then—according to this view—the election of H. J. Tate, the city's first Irish-American mayor, and of Rizzo, its first Italian-American mayor, brought reform to a halt. Blocked in city hall, the reformers moved on to school administration, where Dilworth as chairman and his hand-picked school superintendent, Mark Shedd, set out to revamp the city's educational system.

Actually, the story of reform in Philadelphia is a good bit more complex than this reading would have it. Despite its unquestioned accomplishments, the reform movement worked better for the upper classes than for the "rowhouse" Poles, Italians, Irish, and lower-middle-class Jews and blacks. Slums were torn down, but their place was taken by multi-story office buildings and the former inhabitants were scattered to other slums in outlying areas. A new interstate highway was constructed, but it tore apart older, working-class white-ethnic neighborhoods. "The [reformers] may have understood the evils of machine politics, but in retrospect," the current head of ADA writes in the *Philadelphia Newsletter*, "they had little understanding of the vital role played by neighborhoods in the life of the city." As for the young men brought into the school system by Dilworth and Shedd, they mostly experimented with a variety of educational fads, some of which even Daughen and Binzen, who are sympathetic to their goals, admit were "clearly ill advised."

Rizzo's election was a reaction against elitism in city hall, but it was also a reflection of the changes that have taken place among this country's white ethnics in recent years. Between 1960 and 1970, as National Opinion Research Council data reveal, the incomes of second- and third-generation Poles, Italians, Irish, and working-class groups in general rose sharply. Their children are now attending colleges in large numbers, and on the whole they have gained a greater degree of self-assurance. Thus, many no longer feel, as they once did, that they must look for leadership to older, more assimilated groups. This has happened not only in Philadelphia but all over the country, where state houses and city halls are now, or recently have been, presided over for the first time by politicians with names like Grasso (Connecticut), Dukakis (Massachusetts), Bilandoc (Chicago), Moscone (San Francisco), Caliguri (Pittsburgh). Alongside black mayors in Detroit, Newark, and Los Angeles, white ethnics today govern many of America's largest communities.

It would appear, then, that white ethnics, who were in recent memory mocked and then deserted by liberal reformers, have decided to stand up for themselves. Frank Rizzo, as the authors of *The Cop Who Would Be King* make clear, may be too idiosyncratic both in personality and in performance to be regarded as typical of the new breed of white-ethnic politicians, but within the not too distant future it should become possible to draw some conclusions about how this group behaves in office. It will be especially interesting to see whether they will be able to deal with the legitimate needs and grievances of their own white-eth-

"An extraordinary achievement"*

KABBALAH
The Way of the Jewish Mystic

Perle Epstein

From King Solomon's breathing exercise and the medieval Jewish Shangri-La, to the Baal Shem Tov and today's Hasidim...a clear, colorful, complete history of Jewish mysticism—its past roots and present appeal. *"Explains the Kabbalah with as much clarity as it can be explained and with a genuine feeling for mystic lore. I recommend it to all readers."*—ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER
$6.95 at all booksellers
**Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, The Rabbinical Assembly*

1001 Questions and Answers about
JUDAISM
David C. Gross

The perfect gift book for birthdays and Bar Mitzvahs—a unique reference to Jewish language, literature, festivals, holidays, ceremonies, peoplehood, identity, religious concepts, ancient and modern history, social ethics, contemporary issues, involvement with Israel, and much much more...all in an appealing, quick-reference, question-and-answer format. Illustrated, $8.95 at all booksellers

DOUBLEDAY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK IN 90 DAYS

Wanted: book manuscripts on all subjects. Expert editing, design, manufacture and marketing—all under one roof. Completed books in 90 days. Low break-even. Two FREE books and literature give details, costs, success stories. Write or phone Dept. 371

EXPOSITION PRESS, INC.
900 So. Oyster Bay Rd., Hicksville, N.Y. 11801
(516) 822-5700 (212) 895-0081

Judaica, catalog of old and rare books, ephemera, graphics 1650-1960. Sent on request. Future catalogs of children's books, art, photography, Americana.

ZITA BOOKS
Box 304
Ansonia Station
New York, N.Y. 10023

PERFECT BOOKMARK

Hidden spring mechanism ingeniously holds each page back as you read. Gift boxed. Only $3.50 each, postpaid. Send check or money order to Pentalic Corp., 132 W. 22nd St., New York, N.Y. 10011. Also sold at better book and gift stores.

CONTINUITY OF EXCELLENCE

The Mount Sinai Medical Center Pooled Income Fund helps assure excellence of medical service in the future, while providing donors and loved ones with life income.

Berne Bachrach, Director, Deferred Gifts Office, One Gustave L. Levy Place, New York, N.Y. 10029 Telephone: (212) 650-6372

nic constituents, and avoid stoking their prejudices and fears, while going about the seemingly impossible task of attempting to make our cities and states whole again.

To Have & Have Not

THE VAST MAJORITY: A JOURNEY TO THE WORLD'S POOR. By MICHAEL HARRINGTON. *Simon & Schuster. 281 pp. $9.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL LEDEEN

IN *The Vast Majority,* Michael Harrington, who is identified on the book's jacket as "the most eminent social critic, activist, and socialist in this country," purports to offer an analysis of global inequality; a series of first-hand accounts of poor countries (really travel diaries masquerading as social science); and a "remedy" for the current world system, which, according to Harrington, "makes children leprous in Bombay, furrows the foreheads of women in Kenya, and turns Indians in Guatemala into drunkards." The villain of the piece, to no one's surprise, is the United States, indeed "the people of the United States," who in their "cruel innocence" are the keystone of this entire repressive and exploitative edifice.

In Harrington's view, Americans are responsible for the suffering of the world's poor because they participate in the capitalist system, which has committed the grave sin of imposing a "growth process" on the Third World from without, instead of permitting underdeveloped countries to evolve naturally and organically. As if this were not enough, the growth process itself turns out to be a sham, because it is based on nothing but the desire for profit on the part of external capitalist forces led by multinational corporations. As a result, the Third World has no hope of reaching the standard of living of the developed West, because even when it achieves high levels of productivity, its wealth is drained off into the capitalist world—largely into the U.S. marketplace.

All of this will sound familiar to anyone who has been following the debate on the so-called New Economic Order, which is essentially the demand by poor countries (the "South") that rich nations (the "North") redress the balance between them by canceling current indebtedness, indexing world commodities (to guarantee that prices keep pace with inflation in the North), and contributing a greater, if still modest, proportion of their GNP to the South in the form of economic aid. Although he himself would like something even more radical, Harrington endorses this program.

Now, there is a case to be made for spreading the wealth around the world more equally, and Harrington recognizes that the case is essentially moral. Unfortunately, the moral argument can be stated in a line or two—hardly sufficient even for a volume so slim as this one, and hardly the stuff of "scientific socialism." In consequence, Harrington has written some two hundred fifty pages of incoherent, pretentious, and contradictory nonsense—something of a feat on a subject already overrun with nonsense.

THE central thesis—and the central weakness—of the book is the claim that misery is due to capitalism. If there is one subject that any self-respecting socialist ought to have mastered, it is this. But Harrington, despite his numerous protestations against vulgar Marxism, remains the slave of a rigidly mechanistic view of both the history and the contemporary practice of capitalism. Worse still, he has gotten many of his categories confused, and repeatedly confounds bourgeois society with capitalism, the growth of cities with the industrial revolution, and accident with what Hegel used to call "the cunning of history."

Thus, for example, we are told that during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, cholera was an "equilibrium mechanism" which facilitated the "rough balance between available humans and job openings." Harrington even cites

MICHAEL LEDEEN *is executive editor of the* Washington Review of Strategic and International Studies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the destruction of the staple crops of Mayan society by the Spanish conquistadors (to make room for coffee and beef for the home market) as an example of capitalism destroying the internal coherence of a native society. This sort of exercise was once termed "button, button where's the bourgeoisie?" by the historian J.H. Hexter, who pointed out that there can *be* no classicial capitalism without a bourgeois society—something not particularly evident in 15th-century Spain, let alone Latin America. In any case, as the late George Lichtheim frequently observed, non-Western societies really do not belong in Marx's framework at all; both the Marxist analysis and the terms of Marxist discussion (socialism, capitalism, feudalism) are irrelevant to countries outside Western Europe.

Harrington's treatment of capitalism derives from the American radicalism of the 60's, according to which anything America and American businesses do is "capitalism" or "imperialism," and the underdeveloped societies are the innocent bodies upon which it is done. This model runs throughout *The Vast Majority*, even though there are moments when Harrington himself realizes that he has got it all wrong. One such moment occurs in his travel diary from India, when it suddenly dawns on him that no amount of structural change can transform a caste society:

> Now, my Marxist structural analysis is being tempered by a vivid impression of the tremendous force of history, of the gigantic psychological and intellectual lacunae left over from much more than a thousand years of cultural history. Structure, God knows, is profoundly important, and India is cruelly used every day because of its systematically inferior position in the world economy. But even in the utterly unlikely event that we could remove those institutional negativities and inequities, the ancient India . . . would remain. . . .

But Harrington is not one blindly to accept the force of "history," and so a few pages later he offers his "solution" to the Indian problem: "many of the truly holy and profound institutions of India should be, and must be, smashed. Nonviolently, persuasively, rationally smashed; but smashed." In line with this, we find him giving his approval to Julius Nyerere's brand of socialism in Tanzania, even though (as he notes in passing) there is a "risk of authoritarianism" in that country because of the single-party system and because even the candidates from that single party are subject to confirmation by the national executive. But Nyerere is a smasher, and he will impose socialism on Tanzania, and so one can wink at his anti-democratic regime.

HARRINGTON, in short, has chosen to ignore the central fact about the Third World: its exquisitely totalitarian political structure. This is a curious omission for a democratic socialist, who ought to know that the problem of distribution cannot be dealt with until there is a *democratic* revolution. For if you do not have political democracy, national wealth will not be distributed throughout the population. Thus, until the poor within a country have enough political power to compel the wealthy to share with them, even a massive influx of money and "infrastructure" will not solve the problem of poverty. One need only look at the behavior of the Saudi royal family—several thousand strong—to grasp the fatuousness of the argument that sharing the wealth of the capitalist North will bring about a more equitable distribution of resources in the South. Harrington is so obsessed with the notion of America's responsibility for world poverty that he refuses to see what is right there under his nose: the responsibility of the ruling classes of the Third World.

Harrington conveniently overlooks another central fact about the demands for the New Order: most of the countries asking the United States and Western Europe to contribute to their welfare are dedicated to the enfeeblement of the West. Significantly, there is little discussion in the book of the successful Arab oil embargo and attendant price rise, for to have dealt with these would have compelled

Make this Passover Different . . .
Use the Derovan-Berliner Haggadah at your Seder

THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

edited by David Jay Derovan and Moshe Berliner

Four Books in One
A complete Haggadah in large, easy-to-read type with a lucid English translation.
Dozens of short "Vortlach." Short, intellectually keen and inspiring insights into the Exodus, Passover and their meaning to us today.
A comprehensive and accurate compendium of the Laws and Customs of Passover.
70 full-color reproductions of hand-colored linoleum block prints by the young American-Israeli artist, Daniel Derovan.

$5.95

At your bookstore or from

Jewish Community Enrichment Press
1126 S. Clark Dr., Los Angeles, California 90035

Buy direct and save: For every order of 10, receive 1 free.

All orders must include payment and 50¢ for postage & handling. In California, include 6% sales tax.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harrington to recognize that the Arab countries, which are now investing billions in the capitalist North, should themselves be asked to make massive investments in the South, where the petroleum price increases have sounded the death knell for most development plans. Instead, we find a tortured discussion of American grain policies at home and abroad. Here Harrington stubbornly maintains that the United States purposefully and cynically uses food as a weapon to exploit the Third World, even though the evidence he himself adduces demonstrates that America, first, does not have the means to impose a food embargo and therefore cannot brandish a food weapon the way the Arabs brandish the oil weapon, and, second, that the one time the United States did act as a food cartel—selling wheat to the Soviet Union in the early 70's—it lost money. Some capitalism, some weapon.

It would seem self-evident that a cheap energy supply is essential to the Third World if it wishes to develop its industry; yet the growing scarcity and expense of traditional energy sources and the parallel rise in the price of petroleum by-products—notably fertilizer—are the major obstacles to that development. Structure or no structure, a country with access to affordable energy and a government and populace capable of organizing itself can make impressive gains (Japan, South Korea, and Italy in the 50's). And structure or no structure, a country which misallocates its resources can run a successful economy into the ground (Italy in the 70's, postwar Great Britain, Soviet agriculture). It is useless to approach these problems through the myths of a bygone day, and it is ludicrous that the source of such myth-making should be a writer who passes for a major American social critic.

Book Notes

The following books, containing material that first appeared in COMMENTARY, have been published over the past months:

Defenses of the Imagination: Jewish Writers and Modern Historical Crisis, by Robert Alter (Jewish Publication Society, $8.50).

Facing Up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics, and Religion, by Peter L. Berger (Basic Books, $11.50).

Eyes, Etc., by Eleanor Clark (Pantheon, $7.95).

The Jewish Presence: Essays on Identity and History, by Lucy S. Dawidowicz (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $10.00).

Remembering Poets: Reminiscences and Opinions, by Donald Hall (Harper & Row, $10.00).

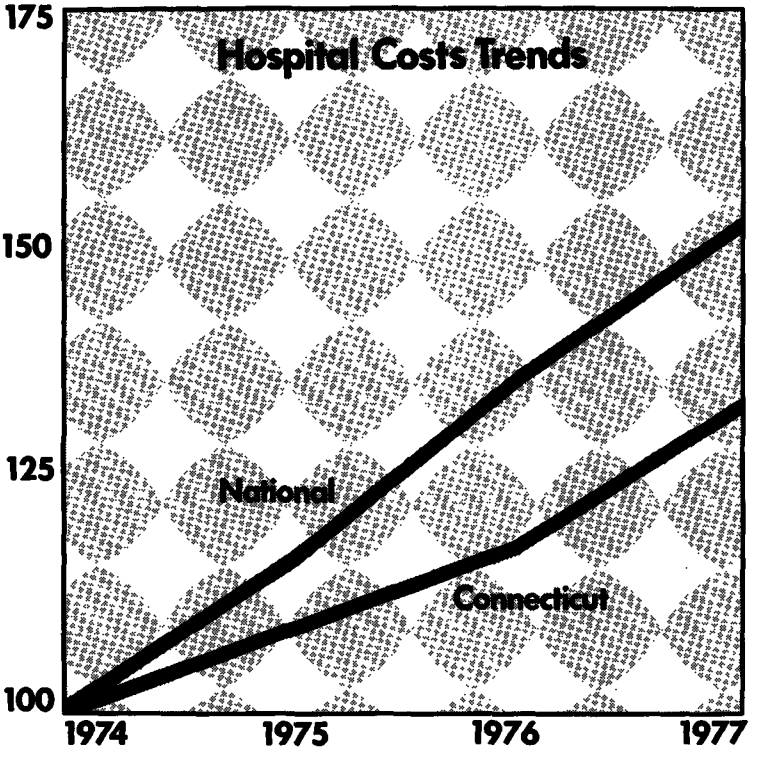
Blue in Chicago, by Bette Howland (Harper & Row, $9.95).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE TIDE IS TURNING.

For a long time, continuous, large increases in hospital costs have been looked at as inevitable.

But, a few years ago, Connecticut established a state commission to try to control these costs. It has succeeded so well, as you can see from the graph, that hospital costs in Connecticut are increasing at a much lower rate than the national average.



And as costs are brought under control, the insurance premiums that pay most of these costs can reflect the improvement. We have adjusted our rates in Connecticut in response to the improved costs records of Connecticut hospitals.

Insurance rates are, in a sense, a mirror of society. Its economics; its technology; even its morality.

And when society takes effective action to solve problems, it shows up in our rates.

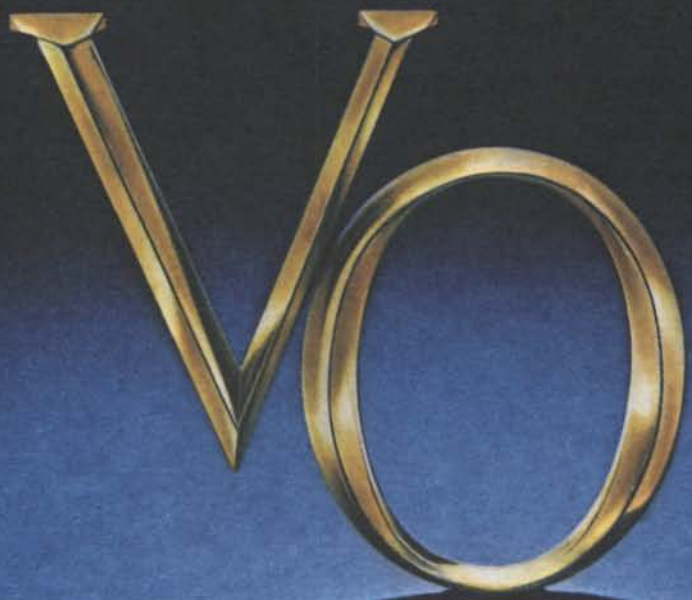
For a copy of the annual report of the Connecticut Commission on Hospitals and Health Care, write The Travelers Office of Consumer Information, One Tower Square, Hartford, Connecticut 06115. Or dial, toll-free, weekdays from 9 to 5 Eastern Time, 800-243-0191. In Connecticut, call collect, 277-6565.

THE TRAVELERS
Raising our voice, not just our rates.

The Travelers Insurance Company, The Travelers Indemnity Company, and Affiliated Companies, Hartford, Conn. 06115

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Impress friends and influence people.



Seagram's V.O.

Bottled in Canada. Preferred throughout the world.

CANADIAN WHISKY. A BLEND OF CANADA'S FINEST WHISKIES. 6 YEARS OLD. 86.8 PROOF. SEAGRAM DISTILLERS CO., N.Y.C.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED